THE

Roman Empreſſes:

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF THE

LIVES and Secret INTRIGUES

OF THE

WIVES

OF THE

Twelve CÆSARS;

Of thoſe of the other Roman EMPERORS, and of the Princeſſes of their Blood.

In which are introduced the moſt remarkable Tranſactions of the ROMAN HISTORY: Collected from ancient Authors Greek and Latin.

With HISTORICAL and CRITICAL NOTES.

Written originally in French, for the Inſtruction of his Royal Highneſs the DUKE DE CHARTRES,

By Monſieur DE SERVIEZ.

And Tranſlated by the

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I HAVE, by Order of the Lord CHANCELLOR, read over the Book, Intituled, *The* Lives and Amours *of the* ROMAN EMPRESSES, and am of Opinion that the printing of it will be very inſtructive and amuſing.

FONTENELLE.

NONIA CELSA,

Wife of MACRINUS.

NOTHING recommends a woman ſo much as beauty, but virtue is the moſt precious ornament of it; and happy are thoſe whoſe whole behaviour is influenced by prudence and diſcretion. A certain poet is of opinion, that the number of thoſe are but ſmall; * but, whatever that ſatyriſt has been pleaſed to advance, beauty and modeſty are not incompatible; and, without going any further for examples than what the hiſtory of the Empreſſes furniſhes us with, we have obſerved that Calpurnia, Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, Octavia, Sabina, and many others, joined the moſt conſummate prudence and virtue to the charms of their perſons, and were not at all the leſs chaſte for being handſome. It cannot be denied but multitudes of women have made very bad uſe of their beauty; a great many inſtances of this have been already given in the courſe of this hiſtory, and the Empreſs Celſa is going to afford us a freſh proof of it.

She was daughter of Diadumenus, whoſe family is not much known, but was probably related to two great men of that name, remarkable for their ſkill in the law, and for their good qualities; but the Empreſs, of whom we are now to treat, did not inherit their virtue; ſhe was of a very amorous complexion, and a great lover of pleaſures. She willingly permitted a crowd of admirers to entertain her with their paſſion, and liſtned to them with that ſort of complaiſance, which is a ſure ſign of the progreſs thoſe flattering diſcourſes make

* Juvenal. *Rara avis in terris nigroque ſimillima Cygno.*

in the heart of a perſon to whom they are addreſſed; ſo that what at firſt was only an agreeable amuſement, in a little time, became a commerce of gallantry, that expoſed her very much to the cenſures of the public, for which the irregularity of her conduct gave but too much reaſon; for ſhe proceeded from one degree of libertiniſm to another, till, at laſt, ſhe had not the leaſt ſhadow of modeſty left; ſo true it is, that when a woman has once broke the ice, and got over the rules of decency, there is nothing ſo bad but what ſhe is capable of.

Of all Celſa's lovers, Macrinus had perhaps the leaſt reaſon to hope for ſucceſs. He was a Moor by nation, of a very obſcure family, and had none of thoſe good qualities that could make amends for the meanneſs of his extraction, and other imperfections; on the contrary, he was diſagreeable in his perſon, for his head was bald, his noſe turned up, was of a coarſe and clumſy make, of very poor natural parts; ill-natured, cruel, and had ſomething in his countenance that was low, and not at all pleaſing. Notwithſtanding all theſe objections, Celſa did not diſdain to give him a favourable hearing, and even the ſtrongeſt proof of his not being indifferent to her. Celſa was one of thoſe women who ſtand in need of a huſband for a cloak, and to patch up their broken reputations. She could not hope to find one among thoſe to whom ſhe had been very liberal of her favours; ſucceſsful gallants are generally, leaſt of all, deſirous to be huſbands; it was reſerved for Macrinus to marry the miſtreſs of all his rivals.

Celſa's becoming wife to Macrinus did not put a ſtop to her diſſolute behaviour; on the contrary, it only ſerved to furniſh her with more opportunities of indulging her paſſions. Macrinus, as we have obſerved, was not amiable enough to defend

his wife's heart againſt the importunate attacks of innumerable polite, and genteel lovers, that paid their court to her with great aſſiduity; and the vicious habits ſhe had contracted, were too ſtrong to be influenced by the rules and punctilios of decency. She therefore denied herſelf none of thoſe pleaſures which are prohibited by marriage, but gave herſelf up entirely to the bent of her inclinations without the leaſt reſerve or reſtraint, ſo that her gallantries and debaucheries became the ſubject of every body's diſcourſe. Verſes were compoſed, and very induſtriouſly diſperſed, for fear any one ſhould remain ignorant of her proſtitutions; but Celſa, who was paſt bluſhing, carried it off with an amazing impudence, and was the perſon in the world the leaſt out of countenance upon that ſcore: For, having hardened herſelf againſt all that could be ſaid to her diſadvantage, and fearing neither the tongues nor pens of criticks, ſhe added to the number of her lovers * by making the firſt advances herſelf.

Favours that were ſo cheap, one might imagine, were not valuable enough to procure her gallants much above the ordinary ſtamp; ſhe, however, made an illuſtrious conqueſt, and that was the Emperor Severus, who was ſo captivated as to become one of them. Riches and honours entered with this Prince into the habitation of Macrinus, ſo that her other lovers vaniſhed. Severus was never weary of heaping benefits upon Celſa's huſband. This upſtart, who, till then, had been forced to get a poor livelyhood by mean occupations, was, all on a ſudden, raiſed to the greateſt emyloyments; and in a few days gained more by his wife's talents, than he had been able to do in his whole life by his induſtry. The publick, who are not eaſily impoſed upon, took it in this ſenſe;

 and

* Capitolin. in Macrin.

and did not fail to attribute the favours the Emperor beſtowed upon Macrinus, * to thoſe which he received from Celſa. It has been always obſerved, that none are ſo likely to make great and rapid fortunes as thoſe whoſe wives are beautiful, and complaiſant enough to oblige Princes. Macrinus, who had been a notary, and had even been forced to appear in the amphitheatre among the gladiators, was, by the credit and intereſt of Celſa, put upon a level with the greateſt perſons in the empire; and his wife's having found the ſecret of ſubduing the Emperor's heart, was more advantageous to her huſband, than if he had defeated all the enemies of the republick. Thus monarchs, who are ſlaves to their paſſions, frequently confer, upon the baſe and unworthy inſtruments of their vices, thoſe honours and preferments that ought to be the rewards of true merit, and of worthy actions.

Juſt about the time that Macrinus was coming into favour at court, Celſa was brought to bed of a ſon, whom ſhe named *Diadumenian*, becauſe he came into the world with a ſort of ſtring bound round his forehead, ſomething in the ſhape of a diadem. Thoſe who were ſent for, to draw his horoſcope, did not fail to make the moſt flattering predictions upon this happy circumſtance. They promiſed Celſa, that her huſband would be Emperor, that the child ought to be looked upon as the ſon of a perſon, who was one day to be inveſted with the ſovereign authority; and added, that he himſelf would, in due time, be exalted to that ſupreme dignity.

The death of Severus made no alteration in Macrinus's fortune; for Caracalla, who was intirely governed by his odd humours and caprices, added new favours to thoſe which his father had ſo

* Triſtan. Comment. Hiſtor. Capitolin.

ſo profuſely ſhewn to Celſa's huſband, and honoured him with one of the greateſt and moſt important employments in the Empire; for which unworthy choice, as we have obſerved, he paid very dear; for Macrinus was not aſhamed to become the aſſaſſin of his benefactor. He committed that crime * with ſo much precaution, that at firſt no-body ſuſpected him; and when Audentius, who, as well as Macrinus, was colonel of the Prætorian guards, had refuſed the empire on account of his great age, the army, upon a report of the Parthians approaching, elected Macrinus with a great deal of precipitation, thinking him the propereſt perſon to ſtop the barbarians, who, they believed, were juſt ready to fall upon them. In effect, Artabanes, highly exaſperated at the perfidious treatment of Caracalla, put himſelf at the head of a very powerful army to be revenged, and made great marches to attack the Romans, who, on their ſide, prepared to defend themſelves. Two or three battles were fought, in which vaſt numbers were deſtroyed on both ſides. The Parthians claimed the honour of the victory, and made great rejoicings. They loſt, however, as many as the Romans, who ridiculed the barbarians for valuing themſelves upon their imaginary victory. Macrinus, in the mean time, who was neither general nor ſoldier, and who was very impatient to get his election confirmed by the ſenate, did not diſdain to treat with Artabanes. He ſent him ambaſſadors, who aſked him if he had well conſidered againſt whom he had fitted out ſuch an army? that if he only deſired to be revenged on Carrcalla, he might reſt contented, ſince that baſe and unworthy Emperor had already met with his juſt deſerts for that horrid treachery, in which no-body was concerned but himſelf.

* Herodian. Spartian.

That Macrinus, who was elected Emperor, had nothing ſo much at heart as to be upon good terms with the Parthians, and to obſerve religiouſly the treaty of peace that Caracalla had violated; that he offered to reſtore to him all the ſpoils that the Romans had taken from the Parthians, and alſo the priſoners; and, to give him a proof of the deſire he had to repair, as much as in him lay, the affront that Caracalla had put upon him, he would make him a preſent of a great ſum of money. Artabanes, who had no perſonal pique againſt any body but Caracalla, accepted of theſe propoſals and retired.

Macrinus was no ſooner elected, than the troops were afflicted at the conſideration of their not having upon the throne, one of Antoninus's family; and their diſcontent appeared by a deep ſilence throughout the whole army. Macrinus's friends being apprehenſive that they would chuſe ſome perſon related to Antoninus, (for there were ſeveral of them among the officers) adviſed Macrinus to give his ſon Diadumenian the name of Antoninus, in order to ingratiate him with the legions; and Macrinus, knowing how dear that name was to the army, gave it to his ſon, and made him his partner in the empire.

The news of Caracalla's death being brought to Rome, the citizens by their countenances, expreſſed their ſatisfaction at being delivered from the cruel oppreſſions of that tyrant. Macrinus's election was not indeed what they deſir'd, for they could not perceive in this new Emperor either birth or merit; but, after Caracalla, they did not think it poſſible they ſhould fall into worſe hands. This was what the ſenators repeated many a time with tranſports of joy, when Macrinus informed them that the legions had made choice of him to ſupply the place of Caracalla. The ſenate (now quite

quite ſtripp'd of their liberties) approv'd of this election, decreed to Macrinus all the honours and titles that were become inſeparable from the ſovereign authority, and confirmed to Diadumenian the ſurname of Antoninus.

If in Macrinus Rome had an Emperor without merit, in Celſa they had an Empreſs without modeſty; her proſtitutions were known to every body. It was, however, to her that all the orders of the town went in the moſt reſpectful manner to pay their homage.

The ſenate, more flattering again than the people, exhauſted their whole ſtock of adulation, declared her auguſt, and honoured, with the moſt pompous titles, a woman whom her ſcandalous debauches had covered with infamy.

Macrinus loſt no time in acquainting his wife with his exaltation to the empire, and the honour the legions had conferred upon their ſon, in giving him the name of Antoninus. It appears by the letter he wrote her upon this occaſion, that the Romans had a greater veneration for the above-mentioned name, than for that of their gods, and that their infatuation for it went even to impiety, for which reaſon Macrinus proteſts to Celſa, that he held himſelf leſs obliged to them for the empire than for the ſurname of Antoninus, which they had given his ſon: his words are theſe: *I have juſt now received an ineſtimable preſent; you will, no doubt, imagine I am going to ſpeak of the empire that the legions have honoured me with, but it is far beyond it, for that has frequently been beſtowed upon very unworthy men. Know then that you are become mother to Antoninus, and they have given me an Antoninus for a ſon; what a piece of good fortune for you and for me! what glory to our family! what a preſage of happineſs to my empire! may the gods grant, and eſpecially the cæleſtial*

Juno, whom you revere ſo religiouſly, that I be found worthy of being father to Antoninus, and that in our ſon may revive his virtues as well as his name.

It was not only Diadumenian that borrowed a name, for Macrinus changed his own for that of Severus. Happy would it have been for him if, when he mounted the throne, he had quitted his vices together with his name, but it is not ſo eaſy a matter for a man to leave off bad habits, ſuch efforts are neceſſary for that, as Macrinus was not capable of. It is true that, in order to ingratiate himſelf with the Romans, he made very good regulations, and among others, inflicted heavy penalties upon adulterers, certainly not conſidering how many people his wife would make liable to them. He puniſhed falſe accuſers with death, which ſeverity ſtifled, as it were, the infectious breath of thoſe ſerpents who coſt ſo many people their lives. He made a great many other uſeful ordinances, but he cauſed them to be executed with ſuch rigour as more than contra-balanc'd the uſefulneſs of them, and alienated from him the peoples affections; becauſe theſe laws were rather looked upon as the effect of his cruelty and ill-nature, than of any deſire he had to prevent miſchief and promote virtue.

Diadumenian, at an age that ought to be acquainted with nothing but mildneſs and ſweetneſs of temper, ſhewed great ſigns of the contrary. For Macrinus, after having put to death the chiefs of a conſpiracy that was formed againſt him in Aſia, was inclined to pardon thoſe that were leaſt guilty; but his ſon blamed his clemency, and complained of it to his mother. She was then at Rome indulging her vicious appetites, whilſt her huſband and her ſon were making the eaſt tremble with their violent proceedings. She there received

ceived her ſon's letter, in which he gives a ſpecimen of what he was capable of. *It appears (ſays he) that the Emperor is unmindful of your intereſt and his own, ſince he can ſo eaſily prevail upon himſelf to forgive. You ought to make uſe of the power you have over him to perſuade him to puniſh Arabian, Tullus, and Gellius, whom he has pardoned; for, by putting them to death, he will effectually hinder them from doing us any further harm.* Diadumenian did not ſtop there, he wrote to his father upon the ſame account, and omitted nothing he could think of to ſpirit him up to revenge. Theſe letters became publick, and they gave every body a very bad impreſſion of a Prince that could give ſuch early tokens of inhumanity. Macrinus, however, did not ſtand in need of his ſon's exhortations to cruelty, he daily gave but too evident proofs of it, by treating the ſoldiers with extream rigour, and ſuffered them to want common neceſſaries, while he was wallowing in luxury and pleaſures at Antioch. He was dreaded on account of his ſeverity, and hated for his effeminacy.

People could not indure that brutal haughtineſs which he affected, and which was ſo far from making the obſcurity of his birth forgot, that it only ſerved to put every body in mind of it. But what moſt diſpoſed the legions to revolt was, their diſcovering that he was the murderer of Caracalla, whoſe name and memory were very dear to them. It was then that they heartily repented their having raiſed to the empire that infamous aſſaſſin, and determined to place Antoninus Heliogabalus, who was nearly related, and perhaps, ſon to Caracalla, upon the throne.

This young Prince was extraordinary handſome. He was then at Emeſſa with Mæſa his grand-mother, who, after the death of her ſiſter the Empreſs Julia, had been ordered to quit Antioch,

tioch, where ſhe lived in ſuch magnificence as gave jealouſy to Macrinus. She retired then to Emeſſa, the place of her birth, with her daughters Soémias and Mamea, and thither ſhe conveyed the immenſe riches which ſhe had amaſſed, during the whole reigns of Severus, her brother-in-law, and Caracalla, her nephew. Her two daughters were widows, and had each of them a ſon. That of Soémias was named Avitus Baſſian, and was afterwards known by the name of Heliogabalus; Mamea's ſon was called Alexian, who ſome time after, took the name of Alexander. Mæſa took a great deal of care of their education, dedicated them to the ſun, which the inhabitants of Emeſſa adored by the name of Elagabalus; and even made them prieſts of that divinity, to which the neighbouring nations, kings, and ſatrapes paid a ſuperſtitious worſhip, and ſent magnificent preſents. Baſſian, who was older than his couſin Alexian, exerciſed the office of the prieſthood. He appeared in a purple habit ſpotted with gold, wearing a ſort of diadem or tiara adorned with jewels, whoſe luſtre ſet off the majeſty of his countenance, which was the admiration of every body, eſpecially the Roman ſoldiers, who were encamped near Emeſſa, and who often went into the temple to be preſent at the ſacrifices of Heliogabalus, whom they ſaw perform the function of Pontiff with extraordinary pomp, and in a moſt graceful manner. But what made this young Prince ſo dear to the troops, was the report that Mæſa * gave out, of his being ſon to Caracalla, what perhaps was true enough. Her emiſſaries induſtriouſly ſpread this abroad, and ſaid that Caracalla having fallen deſperately in love with his couſin Soémias when ſhe was at court, had a ſon by her, and this was Heliogabalus whom Macrinus had deprived of the empire,

* Capitolin. in Macrin. Lamprid. in Diadumen.

empire, which was his right. Mæſa on her ſide, very cunningly diſpoſed the ſoldiers to believe whatever ſhe pleaſed, by making them great preſents, and promiſing them very conſiderable rewards if they would defend the ſon of Caracalla againſt the ſnares and deſigns of Macrinus. Eutichian and Gannys, Mæſa's freedmen, made the moſt of this favourable diſpoſition of the legions, who liſtened very attentively to all theſe diſcourſes. They told them that they ought to prefer the ſon of Caracalla, who had loved them ſo entirely, to Macrinus, that man of yeſterday, the murtherer of their Emperor, equally incapable and unworthy to govern the empire. That, after all, their own intereſts required, that they ſhould place Heliogabalus upon the throne, becauſe that could not chuſe but infinitely oblige Mæſa, who would not fail to diſtribute her riches among them.

The ſoldiers, who are for the moſt part extremely fond of changes, and who were already much averſe to Macrinus, on account of the rough treatment he gave them, lent a favourable ear to theſe propoſals, and even promiſed to do whatever ſhould be requeſted of them. Mæſa perceiving the good inclinations of the troops, and that ſhe could pretty ſafely depend on their endeavours and aſſiſtance, in conſideration of the recompence ſhe had given them hopes of; like a ſkilful woman, ſeized the happy moment that preſented itſelf, to place her grandſon upon the throne. She went out of Emeſſa in the night with all her family, and brought Heliogabalus into the camp, cloathed in a magnifient robe that Caracalla had ſometimes appeared in, which was artfully contrived on purpoſe to put the legions in mind of him. Eutichian whiſpered it about that Mæſa was inclined to diſtribute a large ſum of money among the troops; he gained over the principal officers, and

and thoſe whom he could not prevail upon to declare for him, as being uncertain about the event, he perſuaded to ſtand neuter. As ſoon as day appeared, they preſented Heliogabalus to the ſoldiers, who proclaimed him Emperor, and put on him the imperial purple robe, giving him the name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. After this ceremony came Mæſa's preſent: She cauſed gold and ſilver to be thrown among them in great plenty, nor could ſhe poſſibly do it more à propôs, for the ſoldiers immediately reported that they had found a ſon of Caracalla, and that Mæſa was ſcattering money in abundance among the troops; this made the ſoldiers flock together from all parts, in order to get their ſhare of the booty, and who were ſo many added to the Emperor's party.

Macrinus was informed at Antioch of what paſſed in Phœnicia, but did not think a faction conducted by a woman was much to be feared, ſo without ſtirring from Antioch, he contented himſelf with ſending Julian, colonel of the prætorian guards, with ſome troops to diſperſe the rebels; but this detachment, inſtead of fighting, joined them. For thoſe who were in the camp having made Heliogabalus mount the walls, told the new comers that he was ſon to Caracalla, and reproached them with their unpardonable ingratitude, in taking up arms againſt the ſon of an Emperor, from whom they had received ſo many benefits, and at the ſame time ſhewed them bags full of money that Mæſa had given them. This object was more perſuaſive than all that the others could alledge; Macrinus's ſoldiers, to obtain the like reward, fell upon their officers, killed them, and then being admitted into the camp, acknowledged Heliogabalus for Emperor, and took the oath of fidelity to him. Mæſa knowing full well that they did not betray Macrinus for nothing,

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recompenſed their perfidiouſneſs, and ſent Julian's head to Antioch, from which place Macrinus was already gone (for he had heard what condition matters were in) in order to fight his antagoniſt; but afterwards he changed his deſign and returned to Antioch, from whence he wrote to the governours of the provinces, and to the ſenate, letters full of contempt for Heliogabalus, who, he ſaid, was a ſilly blockhead, and whom he declared an enemy to the republick. He then thought proper to be mighty liberal to his ſoldiers, whom he endeavoured to exaſperate againſt thoſe who had taken part with the rebels; he gave his ſon the title of auguſt, and thinking he had taken all the precautions that were neceſſary, he remained very quiet at Antioch.

In the mean time Mæſa was reſolved to purſue her point, and having cauſed the army to quit their camp, conducted it towards Antioch in order to beſiege Macrinus, or elſe oblige him to come to a deciſive battle. Macrinus began then to think the affair was no laughing matter. He marched out of Antioch to fight the enemy. The two armies met between Phœnicia and Syria.

That of Macrinus had a great advantage over the other, for beſides the ſuperiority of numbers, he had good generals; whereas Heliogabalus had no-body fit to command his army, for Gannys, who acted as general, had never ſerved, and had done nothing all his life but divert himſelf. Upon this occaſion however, the old obſervation, that good luck is better than ſkill, was verified; for Gannys at firſt found his adverſary ſufficient employment, Heliogabalus's troops fighting deſperately, as knowing, that if they did not conquer they were to expect no mercy on account of their rebellion. But ſome time after, not being able to.

reſiſt

reſiſt the efforts of the Prætorians, they were put to flight.

Mæſa and Soémias ſeeing affairs change to their diſadvantage, alight from their chariot, and throwing themſelves into the midſt of thoſe who fled, reproached them, with tears in their eyes, with their ſhameful behaviour to a Prince they had juſt ſworn to be faithful to. Theſe remonſtrances, which were accompanied with every thing they could think of that was capable of moving the ſoldiers, had ſuch an effect, that they returned to the battle. At that inſtant, Heliogabalus put himſelf at the head of his troops ſword in hand, and ſhewed ſuch a reſolution and courage, as was not to be expected from one of his age. The fight begun again with more fury than ever, but with different ſucceſs, for Heliogabalus's ſoldiers having beaten the firſt rank of their enemies, thoſe that were worſted put their whole army into confuſion. The Emperor ſeeing this, gave all for loſt, and a panick ſeizing him, he fled with ſome of his moſt faithful officers. The Prætorians continued the fight with great obſtinacy, and maintained the honour of their corps; but Heliogabalus calling out to them, aſked for whom it was that they fought and expoſed their lives thus, ſince Macrinus had deſerted them? they all declared for him, upon his promiſing that he would preſerve their rank according to their requeſt.

Macrinus, who had quitted his imperial robe that he might not be known, got away as faſt as he could with an intent to go to Rome, with all poſſible expedition, in order to conſult and aſſemble his friends, but he was taken at Chalcedonia, where he ſtopped to repoſe a little, and the ſoldiers cut his head off. Some of them were inclined to ſpare Diadumenian, and would have done

done it, but for the letter he wrote to his mother about the conſpiracy of Gellius, but that was the cauſe of his death. Thus periſhed Macrinus, after reigning fourteen months; its ſhort duration ſhews, that nothing is ſo precarious as power procured by unlawful actions. Hiſtory makes no further mention of Nonia Celſa.

miserably translated and truly a very unentertaining Story.

ANNIA

ANNIA FAUSTINA, JULIA CORNELIA PAULA, JULIA AQUILIA SEVERA,

Wives to the Emperor HELIOGABALUS,

JULIA VARIA SOEMIAS, *his Mother*, JULIA VARIA MÆSA, *his Grand-mother.*

AFTER Macrinus was put to flight, his army having declared for Heliogabalus, Mæſa conducted her grandſon to Antioch, where the honours due to the Emperor were paid him, and where he received the oath of the legions. Mæſa, who was full of ſchemes and projects, thought proper that the new Emperor ſhould write to the ſenate to entreat that they would confirm his election, but his letter was not well calculated to beſpeak their favour; for, whereas the preceding Emperors had never aſſumed any title till after they had been decreed them by the ſenate, he inſolently took, by his own authority, thoſe of Emperor, Cæſar, Auguſt, Happy, ſon of Antoninus, and ſeveral other pompous ſirnames. The obſequious ſenate confirmed, however, what the ſoldiers had done, and the more to pleaſe the new Emperor, they honoured in an extraordinary manner, the memory of Caracalla, whoſe ſon he pretended to be. By the ſame decree the title of auguſt was conferred upon Mæſa and Soëmias, together with all the honours that had ever been given to the mothers of the Emperors.

The ſenators, for all this, regretted Macrinus extremely, and not without reaſon; for he could not poſſibly have been ſucceeded by a more unworthy perſon. To ſay the truth, Heliogabalus was very handſome,

handſome, well made, and had a very agreeable countenance; but never did a fair outſide conceal a more polluted ſoul. In him was to be found an unhappy collection of all ſorts of vices. He had the malice and cruelty of all the tyrants that ever reigned; gave himſelf up entirely to the moſt abominable lewdneſs; carried luxury, prodigality, and inſolence to the higheſt pitch. Being informed that the ſenate had ratified his election, and that he had nothing more to fear, he ſignalized the beginning of his reign by a horrible piece of barbarity and ingratitude, and that was the execution of Gannys, to whom he owed his education, and the empire. This freed-man had been preferred at court by the intereſt of Mæſa, who had always a great eſteem for him, becauſe ſhe had always found him faithful, and very zealous for the welfare of her family. In effect, Gannys, who had been tutor to Heliogabalus, acquitted himſelf of that duty, to the ſatisfaction of all the world; and Heliogabalus himſelf was a witneſs of his behaviour at the laſt battle, which was deciſive in his favour, and was ſo much convinced of the important ſervice he did him upon that occaſion, that, in one of thoſe fits of good humour, to which he was now and then ſubject, he was inclined to chuſe him for a father-in-law, in making him marry his mother Soémias, and to declare him Cæſar. Theſe favours would have been no more than what he ow'd to Gannys, and would have done honour to the new Emperor's gratitude and acknowledgment. The reputation indeed of Soémias was none of the beſt, for ſhe led a very lewd and diſſolute life; but Gannys was not ſo delicate as to refuſe being the Emperor's father-in-law.

In the mean time, inſtead of honouring him, Heliogabalus put him to death. This cruel and un-

ungrateful Emperor, not being able to endure that Gannys ſhould be a ſpectator of his conduct, and eſpecially ſince he took the liberty to adviſe him, ordered him to be executed, and was not even aſhamed to dip his hands in the blood of that faithful ſervant, by giving him the firſt blow himſelf.

This bloody affair was ſucceeded by a great many more, equally unjuſt. Neſtor, whom Macrinus had made colonel of the Prætorian Guards, and Agrippinus, who commanded in Syria, were put to death, becauſe they had fought for their Emperor: Picca and Recanus, who governed Arabia under the direction of Macrinus, loſt their lives for not betraying their maſter; and Heliogabalus puniſhed, in them, a fidelity that he ought to have rewarded. But he was not content with perſecuting virtue, he put vice in credit, and honoured the greateſt crimes. He debaſed the higheſt dignities in the empire, by making them venal, or by beſtowing them upon miſerable eunuchs, and infamous people that had been ſlaves, who were not ſo much as known but by their abominable lives: ſo that in heaping the greateſt preferments upon thoſe unworthy wretches, there was no recompence left for true merit. He would not condeſcend to wear a Roman habit, as all his predeceſſors had done *, but choſe to dreſs after the manner of the Phænicians and Medians, which indeed was very graceful and magnificent, but at the ſame time ſavoured of the ſoftneſs and effeminacy of thoſe nations: at laſt, he quite forgot all thoſe decorums that decency required, and which were ſuitable to his rank; and abandoning himſelf intirely to the moſt brutal debaucheries, paſſed the winter at Nicomedia in thoſe ſhameful occu-

* Herodian. lib. 5. Lamprid.

occupations. Mæſa his grand-mother (than whom no-body underſtood the world better) did not ſee all this without being ſenſibly concerned: it grieved her to the heart that her grandſon ſhould be remarkable for all ſorts of bad qualities, and was apprehenſive that the Romans could never be brought to endure an Emperor that had nothing of the Roman about him, not ſo much as the faſhion of his cloaths: She gave him many wiſe lectures upon that ſubject; but the flatterers he encouraged deſtroyed the force of her arguments. Heliogabalus, continually ſurrounded with thoſe ſycophants, and corrupted by their maxims, looked upon the advice of his grand-mother as the meer whimſies of an old-faſhioned woman, who would needs have him wear the Roman dreſs, for no other reaſon than becauſe all the former Emperors did ſo. On the the other hand Soémias, by her pernicious counſels, effaced the little impreſſion that Mæſa's good ſenſe had made upon her ſon; and, by a baſe approbation of his behaviour, encouraged him in the gratification of all his vicious paſſions. Thus this Prince, being hurried away by his irregular appetites, ſeduced by his young courtiers, and authorized by the bad example of his mother, gave himſelf up to the moſt ſhameful courſe of life that can be imagined, and even went beyond Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, whom he profeſſed to imitate.

It is no new thing for flaterers to extol the weakneſſes and vices of Princes, and to applaud thoſe actions that moſt deſerve to be blamed; but it is not common to ſee a mother encourage her ſon in every thing that is infamous. This, however, Soémias did; and was the more blameable, as ſhe well knew that all the misfortunes Caracalla drew upon himſelf were owing to his cruelty and his debaucheries; ſhe had therefore great reaſon

reaſon to apprehend the ſame fate for her ſon. It is true, that a young man ſeldom learns any good from a mother who is herſelf a libertine, and Soémias was too regardleſs of her own reputation, to be very ſolicitous about that of Heliogabalus. Mæſa, indeed, who looked further into things, and weighed conſequences, gave him better counſel; one inſtance of which was, that he ſhould go to Rome, where ſhe ſaid his preſence was neceſſary; and, in effect, Macrinus had been wanting to himſelf in nothing more than in not going thither immediately, after his election, but continuing at Antioch. The Emperor was at laſt convinced of what importance it was to him to gain the ſenate, and as ſoon as the winter was over, ſet out for Rome.

His arrival there only ſerved to make people regret Macrinus; for he renewed at Rome, all the exceſſes that he had practiſed at Nicomedia. He went to the ſenate, and obliged the ſenators to invite Soémias his mother, and Mæſa his grandmother, to take their places among them. This was a monſtrous novelty, and a ſcandalous degradation of the ſenatorial dignity. The proudeſt of the Empreſſes, and even thoſe that had carried their authority the greateſt lengths, never dreamed of aſſuming any ſuch privilege; and we have obſerved in the life of Agrippina, that the ſenate broke up one day when ſhe attempted to do the like. But the ſenators had now no longer the probity and reſolution of their fore-fathers; the Emperor's will and pleaſure was become the only Law. Heliogabalus cauſed That to be permitted to Soémias and Mæſa, which Agrippina could never obtain, and which Livia never had the aſſurance to aſk for. Thus the ſenate entreated them to aſſiſt in their aſſemblies, they took their places next

next to the conſuls, voted, ſigned, and, in ſhort, performed all the functions of ſenators.

Heliogabalus did not ſtop there. Not content with having made his Mother a member of the ſenate, he would needs put her at the head of another ſenate, where ſhe performed the office of preſident. He created a ſenate of ladies, and appropriated, to that purpoſe, a palace that was ſituated upon Mount Quirinal; and in this grave tribunal were decided all the feminine cauſes, and all the weighty affairs belonging to the ſex,* particularly modes and faſhions, precedency, and what beſt became each make and complexion. It was there deliberated what ladies had a right to be carried in a chair, and what in a litter, who ſhould be permitted to go on horſeback, and who were to have the privilege of wearing gold or jewels. They very ſolemnly iſſued decrees about dreſs, and other affairs of that nature, of the greateſt importance to the good of the publick, and they aſſembled as frequently, and with as much regularity, as if the greateſt intereſts of the empire were tranſacted among them.

If Soémias ſhone at the head of this ridiculous ſenate, Mæſa did not make a leſs illuſtrious figure in the military way. She appeared in an amazon habit at the camp, reviewed the Prætorian cohorts, and had the management of every thing relating to the army. Thus did Heliogabalus, by his fooliſh and unprecedented infatuation, overturn all order and decency. One of the moſt extravagant things he introduced, was the worſhip of his favourite god Elagabalus † with ſtrange and

* Lamprid. in Heliogab.

† Elagabalus was a ſirname given to the ſun, which was adored by the people of Emeſſa. This divinity was nothing but a great ſtone round at the bottom, and ending

and unheard-of ceremonies. This God he cauſed to be brought from Emeſſa to Rome, built him a temple, which was one of the moſt magnificent in the town*, and had every thing that was moſt ſacred and revered carried out of the other temples into that, eſpecially the celebrated ſtatue of Pallas which Æneas brought from Troy †. So he gave the Romans the mortifications of ſeeing a new and ſtrange god preferred to Jupiter; and, by an unaccountable oddneſs of humour, he took it in his head to marry his god Elagabalus to Urania, that famous divinity that was ſo much reſpected in Africa. He cauſed it to be brought from Carthage,

* Herodian. lib. 5.

ending in the ſhape of a Cone. It was black, and had ſome odd characters engraven upon it. The Phænicians pretended that it fell from Heaven, and had the greateſt veneration for it.

† The ſtatue of Pallas, that was ſo carefully preſerved at Rome, was the very ſtatue that uſed to be in the citadel of Troy, and to which the welfare of that town was annexed; for which reaſon the Greeks, who were perſuaded that the town could never be taken as long as the ſtatue of Pallas, or the Palladium, continued within the place, reſolved to carry it off, coſt what it would. In effect, Ulyſſes and Diomedes crept through an aqueduct, went up to the citadel, maſſacred the Guards, and carried away the goddeſs. Æneas took it with him to Rome, and it was kept with great veneration in the temple of Veſta, where it was in danger of being burnt; for the temple being ſet on fire, the Palladium would have been reduced to aſhes if it had not been for the courage and piety of Metellus Cecilius, who went into the flames and ſaved the goddeſs, at the hazard of his life. His zeal coſt him his eye-ſight; ſo, to reward him, they gave him the privilege of entering into the ſenate in a litter, or in a chariot, which had never been granted to any body before.

Carthage, and celebrated his wedding at Rome, and in the provinces, with great pomp, ſaying, that there was never a fitter match than that Elagabalus ſhould marry Urania; that is, that the ſun ſhould marry the moon. But the tragical part of this new ſort of worſhip was, that the Emperor, to do honour to his God, in a brutal and abominable manner, ſacrificed children, which he choſe out of the moſt illuſtrious families; and whilſt theſe helliſh ſacrifices were going on, he celebrated the praiſes of his god in hymns, which he ſung in the Syrian language, and made Soémias and Mæſa do the ſame.

We ſhall not take upon us to enter into a detail of Heliogabalus's life, which was one continued ſeries of all ſorts of crimes; for it would only be a mark of diſreſpect to the reader, and of our ſmall regard to decency, were we to enumerate the horrible acts of lewdneſs and laſciviouſneſs that this deteſtable Prince committed; we chuſe rather to draw a veil over thoſe ſhameful pollutions. After he had provided his god with a wife, he thought proper to chuſe one for himſelf; and as he had deprived the Carthaginians of their Urania, in order to marry her to his Elagabalus, ſo he took it in his head to rob Pomponius of his wife Fauſtina. Annia Fauſtina was one of the moſt accompliſhed ladies in Rome; remarkable not only for her nobility, but the incomparable beauty of her perſon. She was great grand-daughter to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, whoſe name and memory was in the higheſt veneration among the Romans. She was then in the prime of her youth; and, at an age wherein there is but little of diſcretion to be expected, ſhe ſhewed * ſuch prudence

* Dio. lib. 79. Triſtan, Comment. Hiſt.

prudence and virtue as had not been met with in her predeceſſors of that name.

When it happens that nobility, beauty and virtue are united in a young perſon, there can be no want of admirers. The charming Fauſtina had abundance of them, but Pomponius Baſſus was the happy man that, for his extraordinary merit, was preferred to all thoſe that aſpired to the honour of poſſeſſing the Princeſs. Probity and goodneſs were hereditary in his family, which had been alſo rendered illuſtrious by the moſt important employments, having been governor of Rome, and afterwards conſul. It might ſafely be affirmed, that there was not in Rome a more honeſt man than Fauſtina's huſband. They lived together in that happy calmneſs and tranquillity, which, in marriage, is generally the conſequence of reciprocal love, until Heliogabalus, being ſmitten with the charms of Fauſtina, looked upon her as a lady that was worthy of his eſteem and affection. At firſt, he contented himſelf with ſhewing her all thoſe tokens of his paſſion that are ſo natural to an aſſiduous lover; but whatever pains he took to make himſelf underſtood, Fauſtina, defended by her own virtue, and her huſband's merit, gave him no hopes of ſucceſs; ſo that the Emperor in the midſt of all his pomp and ſplendor, made no impreſſion upon the Princeſs's heart.

The obſtacles that violent love may meet with, do not always prove a remedy; on the contrary, they very often ſerve only to heighten it. Heliogabalus perceiving that Fauſtina's virtue gave him but little room to hope for thoſe favours, that he had ſo eaſily obtained from other ladies leſs cruel, reſolved to put her huſband to death, in hopes that Fauſtina, who would not liſten to him as a lover, might without difficulty, be prevailed on to receive

ceive him as a huſband, eſpecially as he was inveſted with the ſovereign authority. Thus was Pomponius already condemned, and nothing was wanting but to lay ſome crime to his charge that might furniſh a fair pretence to cut him off; but as that ſenator's conduct had always been without reproach, it was abſolutely neceſſary to invent ſome calumny, the ordinary reſource of tyrants. Heliogabalus complained that Pomponius took upon him to cenſure all his actions, that whatever paſſed in the palace was to be expoſed to his criticiſms; that Pomponius, and his friend Meſſala, had ſet up a ſort of tribunal, where they were ſo audacious as to ſift, and take to pieces the conduct of Emperors, who ought not to be accountable for their behaviour; and, upon theſe falſe and imaginary crimes, the Emperor accuſed Pomponius and Meſſala to the ſenate.

There was no-body preſent that did not know that Fauſtina's beauty was all Pomponius's crime. Heliogabalus's attachment to that charming lady, and the ridiculouſneſs of his complaint, ſufficiently declared the motives of his accuſation; and the ſequel juſtified theſe ſuſpicions. Meſſala was no more blameable than Pomponius. That ſenator had been twice conſul, and was of ſo much weight, that he had cauſed the Emperor Julian to be declared an enemy to the republick, and Severus to be elected Emperor. He was a man of great firmneſs and reſolution, never influenced in the ſenate by complaiſance or flattery; and as he had nothing in view but the publick intereſt, he was either uſeleſs, or contrary to the Emperor's projects: Heliogabalus, therefore, during his reſidence at Nicomedia, ſent for him thither, pretending that he ſtood in need of his aſſiſtance, but in reality to get him out of Rome, where he was apprehenſive that he would oppoſe him; for

there was no-body in the ſenate more dreaded by the Emperor, and his ſycophants, than Meſſala, who was always intrepid and unmoveable.

The rank that theſe illuſtrious men held in the ſenate, the high eſteem they were in at Rome, their virtue and reputation, deſerved, at leaſt, that the matter ſhould be examined into, and that they ſhould not too haſtily give their judgment in a matter of ſo much importance; but Heliogabalus was too much in love to wait the iſſue of theſe tedious proceedings; ſo, forgetting that he himſelf was the accuſer of Pomponius and Meſſala, he would needs be their judge alſo; and as they were too odious to him to make it a matter of doubt, whether they ſhould be puniſhed or acquitted, he was reſolved to make ſure of his work. He therefore ordered them to be executed, and by that flagrant piece of injuſtice, delivered himſelf, in Pomponius, of one that ſtood between him and the object of his paſſion; and in Meſſala of a magiſtrate, who revived the ancient liberty of Rome.

The tears that Fauſtina ſhed did honour to the merit of Pomponius; but Heliogabalus found the method of drying them up. As it was not his intention to ſuffer her to remain long in mourning, he redoubled his ſolicitation, and purſued his point ſo eagerly, and with ſo much diligence, that he prevailed upon Fauſtina to venture upon a ſecond marriage. In effect, ſhe became wife to the Emperor, and was immediately honoured by the ſenate with the title of auguſt. It might be imagined, that Fauſtina, being now amply made amends for the loſs of Pomponius, had reaſon to promiſe herſelf a great deal of happineſs. By marrying the Emperor, ſhe was mounted upon the throne of her anceſtors, and the violent love he had ſhewn for her, ſeemed to give her reaſonable grounds

grounds to hope for its continuance; but pleaſures that are procured by crimes are of no long duration. The Emperor ſoon found thoſe to be inſipid which he had not ſcrupled to purchaſe with a horrid murder. He was no ſooner married, than he was diguſted with Fauſtina, and ſhewed that nothing is a more effectual cure for love than poſſeſſion: He conceived, for Cornelia, as irreſiſtible a paſſion as he had done before for Fauſtina.

Cornelia Paula was one of the beſt families in Rome. It is generally imagined, that ſhe had been married before, and was a mother of children, at leaſt Heliogabalus's pretence for marrying her ſeems to authorize this ſuppoſition. This Prince, whoſe love was as ſoon cooled as warmed, no ſooner ſaw Cornelia, than he was perſuaded it was impoſſible he ſhould ever love any body elſe; he made his addreſſes to her very earneſtly, and to cut ſhort the matter, ſpoke of marriage. The misfortune of Fauſtina, whom he had abandoned, notwithſtanding all her merit, did not plead very much in his favour: A perſon that is fickle, and always ready to change, is not very likely to fix a lady's heart; nor did Cornelia fail to reproach the Emperor with his having caſt off, without any reaſon, the moſt amiable perſon in Rome. Be it as it will, the Emperor was provided with a plauſible excuſe, and Fauſtina's barrenneſs furniſhed him with it. He even informed the publick of the motives of that divorce, and endeavoured to make it paſs for a convincing proof of his wiſdom and prudence, that he ſhould look out for a wife capable of giving him heirs, and perpetuating the Empire in his family, which he ſaid Fauſtina gave him no hopes of; whereas, in Cornelia, he had all the reaſon in the world to expect the accompliſhment of his deſires, as ſhe had already been a mother. Theſe arguments, together with the dazzling

proſpect of the Throne, perſuaded Cornelia to ſupply the place of Fauſtina, and to run the riſk of meeting with the ſame fate. Theſe nuptials were celebrated with incredible magnificence. Never was there ſeen at Rome ſo pompous a ceremony. The Emperor was at an exceſſive expence upon this occaſion. All the orders of the town partook of his bounty, and he heaped favours upon the ſenators, the knights, and the ſenators wives. He gave the ſoldiers and the people, ſeveral very ſplendid entertainments; and to thoſe, ſucceeded all manner of ſhows and games; among the reſt (what had never been ſeen before at Rome) a bloody battle between tygers and elephants.

The ſenate went in a body to pay their reſpects, or rather homage to the new Empreſs, and at the ſame time preſented her with the title of auguſt, which included all the honour that could be given to the wives of the Emperors; for they did not think they could poſſibly ſhew too much zeal for a Princeſs to whom Heliogabalus had given ſuch extraordinary tokens of his eſteem and affection, as to exhauſt his treaſures in honour of her. Nothing could be a greater inſtance of this Prince's want of judgment and reflection, than his not conſidering the bad conſequences of precipitate marriages: It looked as if he had put himſelf to this exceſſive expence for no other reaſon than to make his inconſtancy the more remarkable, and put the greater affront upon Cornelia; for, a few days after his marriage, he divorced her, and deprived her of the title of auguſt.

So ſudden an alteration ſtruck the town with aſtoniſhment. People had, but a week before, been witneſſes of the extraordinary pains the Emperor was at to obtain her good graces, and were quite at a loſs to gueſs what could occaſion ſo quick and unexpected a change. Cornelia was

very

very handſome, and her perſon extremely agreeable; her birth * was worthy of her fortune, and her behaviour had been always conſiſtent with decency; notwithſtanding all which, ſhe became in ſo little a time a heavy burden to this whimſical and ridiculous Emperor. Heliogabalus was ſenſible of his unjuſt conduct in this affair, and was not a little embaraſſed to invent a plauſible excuſe for it.

Cornelia had done nothing to deſerve ſuch injurious treatment; and the publick, who will criticiſe even upon the actions of monarchs, were very curious to know what ſort of pretence the Emperor would find out to colour his inconſtancy; but Heliogabalus was cunning enough to give reaſons that no-body could contradict. He ſaid, that he could not bring his delicacy to be reconciled to certain corporal imperfections † that Cornelia had about her, being well perſuaded that her modeſty would not permit her to diſprove his aſſertion.

The marriage was no ſooner diſſolved, than this fickle Prince ran after new pleaſures. He looked out for a third wife, which at laſt he met with among the veſtal virgins, not being at all aſhamed to add this abominable and ſacrilegious action to all the reſt of his crimes. The veſtals were young girls that conſecrrted their virginity to the mother of the gods by the moſt ſolemn vows, the breach of which was puniſhed with death. They were in great veneration at Rome. Their inſtitution was ſacred, their authority much reſpected, and their perſons inviolable. There was, at that time, a veſtal named Julia Aquilia Severa, daughter to the ſenator Aquilius Sabinus, who had been twice conſul in Caracalla's reign. She was one of the handſomeſt ladies in Rome, and the Veſtal's habit,

* Herodian. lib. 5. † Dio. lib. 79.

bit, inſtead of leſſening, heightened her beauty. The Emperor was captivated with her charms, ſo that he fell in love with her at firſt ſight; and not being a man to deny himſelf any thing he had a mind for, he made frequent viſits to the charming veſtal. This alarmed the reſt of that ſociety; they were too well acquainted with the Emperor's impious character, not to ſuſpect his intentions, and therefore watched him very narrowly.

Severa was not ſo cruel. She prevailed upon herſelf to bear, with great patience, the Emperor's aſſiduities; for nothing ſo much flatters the vanity of a woman, as to ſee a man at her feet to whom all others are inferior. She therefore received, very willingly, his viſits, and liſtened attentively to his propoſals of marriage. It is probable, that ſhe was not at all ſorry to be compelled, by abſolute power, to diſpenſe with thoſe vows, which in all likelihood, ſhe had made without conſulting her inclinations, and at an age wherein ſhe was not a competent judge of the difficulty ſhe might meet with in keeping them; for the veſtals were admitted too young to conſider the weight of the yoke they impoſed upon themſelves; ſo that inſtances were not wanting of their diſhonouring the ſanctity of thoſe engagements by their gallantries; their oaths not being of force enough to get the better of their conſtitutions, and the impetuoſity of youth. Be it as it will, Heliogabalus, in contempt of what was moſt ſacred among the Romans, carried off the veſtal, married her, and declared her auguſt.

The ſenate looked upon this odious and deteſtable match as the forerunner of ſome terrible calamity to the empire. The laws had been always ſtrictly put in force when a veſtal had deſerved puniſhment for breach of chaſtity, nor had the accomplices in that crime ever eſcaped the penalty;

penalty; but, upon this occaſion, the authority of the ſenate was ſuperſeded, and they were reduced to the ſad neceſſity of deploring a misfortune for which there was no remedy. Heliogabalus eaſily perceived the deep ſorrow that this marriage brought upon all the orders of the town, as not only the ſtricteſt laws, but the moſt ancient and religious cuſtom of the Romans, had been thereby trampled under foot. The people exclaimed againſt it as an unheard-of attempt, capable of drawing down upon them the indignation of all the Gods. A deep ſilence reigned among them, and ſuch a melancholy ſat on the countenances of the citizens, that all the town ſeemed in deep mourning.

Though Heliogabalus did not uſually give himſelf much trouble about juſtifying his actions, he yet thought it incumbent on him to excuſe the pretty ſtep he had taken; but he did it in a manner that was more offenſive than the action itſelf, and that was by joking upon a crime, for which *, as an hiſtorian ſays, he deſerved the worſt of deaths. He wrote to the ſenate, that, of all the failings a man was ſubject to, there was none that more intitled him to a pardon than thoſe which were the effects of his frailty; that it was very difficult to reſiſt the violence of love. That Severa's beauty did not give him time to reflect; that his paſſion had ſurprized his reaſon: but that, in ſhort, the miſchief being done, there was no help for it. That after all, he did not ſee any reaſon they had to cry out ſo much againſt what he had done; for, if all was conſidered, it would be found, that it was no very ſtrange thing for a prieſt of the ſun to marry a veſtal. That, on the contrary, they ought to rejoice to ſee two ſacred perſons united by the ſolemn bands of marriage, becauſe that,

* Herodian. lib. 5.

from the conjunction of a pontiff with a veſtal, nothing could be produced but a race that muſt be more cæleſtial than mortal.

Severa found it no difficult matter to exchange her plain and ſimple dreſs for the imperial ornaments; and it muſt be confeſſed, that her conſenting to this marriage, could be attributed to nothing but an unbounded ambition; for, beſides the breach of her vow, which ſhe ſcandalouſly violated, the inconſtancy of Heliogabalus, who made nothing of marrying and unmarrying himſelf as often as he pleaſed, ought to have made her reject his ſolicitations. He exalted his Miſtreſſes to the throne, only to have the pleaſure of hurling them down again, without giving them time to taſte the ſweets of ſovereignty.

Fauſtina and Cornelia, reduced to their original ſtate, lamented their fooliſh credulity; and it was not to be expected that Severa ſhould be able to fix the wavering heart of a prince, who was uncapable of a ſolid and conſtant affection: Accordingly it was not long before her fall adminiſtred matter of conſolation to the diſgraced Empreſſes. Heliogabalus, being preſently out of conceit with his favourite veſtal, divorced her, and at the ſame time took an occaſion to ruin her father Sabinus. It would not have been of a piece, with the reſt of his conduct, if he had remained for any time without ſome new amour; for with him the concluſion of one paſſion was the beginning of another. He ſubſtituted another Empreſs in the place of Severa, and as ſpeedily got rid of her for a fifth, and her again for a ſixth. And ſo great a jeſt did he make of his marriages, and ſuch was the mutability of his temper, that he took Severa again, and re-eſtabliſhed her in all the glory and ſplendour he had juſt ſtripped her of. If Severa had the ſatisfaction to be reinſtated, ſhe had

had alſo, on the other hand, innumerable vexations to undergo from the odd caprices, fickleneſs, and debaucheries of Heliogabalus, for never did any of the Emperors carry exceſſes to ſuch a length. Not content with abandoning himſelf entirely to all ſorts of pollutions, he generally paſſed the night in thoſe infamous places that were appropriated to lewdneſs, where he brutally ſubſtituted himſelf in the place of the moſt remarkable courtezans, counterfeited their voices and geſtures, and proſtituting himſelf to the beſtiality of thoſe whom the fury of their debaucheries had brought thither, ſuch as buffoons and ſlaves, filling Rome with his abominations; ſo that it was ſaid of him, that he was a man for every woman, and a woman for every man.

His monſtrous laſciviouſneſs was never interrupted but by acts of cruelty, or folly, for his very diverſions were fatal to ſome body. Sometimes he took it in his head to cauſe ſo great a quantity of flowers to be thrown from a gallery upon the ſenators, who went to pay their court to him, that a great many were ſmothered. He paſſed whole days in driving chariots, and it was generally in the preſence of the Princeſs Mæſa and Soémias, that he choſe to ſhew his ſkill in that low exerciſe, which expoſed him to the laughter of the people. At laſt, after innumerable follies and extravagancies, he went ſo far as to be formally married to a miſerable ſlave named Hierocles, who, in a ſhort time, became one of the richeſt and moſt potent men in the Empire. He was well pleaſed to be called the miſtreſs, the wife, the queen of Hierocles; and that he might look the more like a woman, he cauſed himſelf to be cloſe ſhaved, took a diſtaff, and employed his time in ſpinning, and other feminine exerciſes, to the great diſhonour of that ſex he intended to imi-

tate. Thus do men fall into the moſt unaccountable actions, when they ceaſe to be directed by reaſon and diſcretion.

Mæſa was in the utmoſt confuſion at this ſhameful behaviour, and could not without the greateſt concern, be a witneſs of the ſcandal Heliogabalus brought upon the imperial dignity, which could not but end in ſome dreadful misfortune. She made uſe of all her art and addreſs to correct theſe diſorders in her grandſon, and perſuade him to reflect a little upon the conſequences of ſuch irregularities; but it was all to no purpoſe: Heliogabalus was entirely directed by his mother, who encouraged him in his debaucheries, and, by her own licentiouſneſs ſet him an abominable example; for this vicious Princeſs, forgetting the reſervedneſs and modeſty of her ſex, and the regard ſhe owed to her rank, abandoned herſelf to the moſt ſcandalous debaucheries and proſtitutions.* Thus, far from oppoſing the depraved inclinations of her ſon, or endeavouring to reclaim him, ſhe was very well pleaſed with his courſe of life, and even commended him for it.

Heliogabalus's odious government became an inſupportable yoke to the Romans, the weight of which he every day increaſed by his cruelties and ridiculous behaviour, which was equally deteſtable and contemptible. But what made the people loſe all patience, was his mad deſign to declare the infamous Hierocles, Cæſar, and his ſucceſſor to the empire, who but the other day was a wretched ſlave.

Mæſa did all † in her power to diſſuade him from this reſolution, which would bring an eternal blot upon the empire. She repreſented to him the injury he would thereby do himſelf and his family; and,

* Lamprid. in Helio. † Dio. lib. 79.

and in order to intimidate him, ſhe told him that ſo unworthy a choice could not fail of cauſing a ſedition, and making the ſenate, the officers of the army, and the people revolt; but Heliogabalus looking upon theſe remonſtrances as ſo many impertinent reprimands, loſt the reſpect he had, till then, ſhewn to his grand-mother, and anſwered by inſolent threats. Mæſa's arguments had however, made ſuch an impreſſion upon his mind, that he was afraid of executing his project: ſo true it is, that wholeſome advice has generally a good effect, even upon thoſe who are determined not to follow it.

Mæſa perceiving how difficult, or rather impoſſible, it was to work upon the obſtinate temper of her grandſon, ſo as to make any conſiderable alteration in him, was convinced that a revolution could not be far off; for Hierocles had got ſuch an aſcendancy over the Emperor, as to be truſted with all his ſecrets, inveſted with his authority, and the canal through which all favours at court were to paſs: This rouſed up the jealouſy of all the grandees, who could not bear that this muſhroom of a man ſhould abſolutely govern the empire, and diſpoſe of their lives and fortunes. Mæſa foreſaw the conſequences, and did not doubt but a change would ſoon happen; ſhe was even apprehenſive of being involved in the misfortunes that threatned the Emperor, ſo that from that time ſhe thought of taking care of herſelf, by abandoning her grand-ſon to his evil deſtiny. The brilliant appearance that ſhe had made at court with the Empreſs Julia her ſiſter, and the power ſhe had enjoyed during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, gave her ſuch a reliſh for grandeur, that ſhe could not endure the thoughts of falling again into the obſcure and private life, ſhe had been forced to take up with in Macrinus's time, and which

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ſhe had reaſon to expect, if the Prince that ſhould ſucceed Heliogabalus ſhould happen not to be in her intereſts. She therefore laboured all ſhe could to order matters ſo, as that the Empire might devolve upon ſomebody ſhe could reckon upon, and who might preſerve to her her rank, credit and authority, which was what ſhe was moſt ſolicitous about.

She could think of no-body more proper for her purpoſe than young Alexian her grand-ſon, couſin-german to Heliogabalus, and ſon of Mamea; and ſhe thought ſhe might the more eaſily procure him the Empire, as he was next heir, conſidering that Heliogabalus had no child. If the Emperor could be brought to adopt him, ſhe imagined there would be no difficulty in the thing; but as Heliogabalus was of a very obſtinate temper, ſhe knew ſhe ſhould have occaſion for all her ſkill and addreſs to work that point without exaſperating him. Mæſa had however ſo ſtudied him, and was ſo well acquainted with his humour, that ſhe ſucceeded; for as ſhe knew his weak ſide, ſhe watched the favourable moment, and finding him well enough inclined to liſten to her, ſhe gave him to underſtand, that it could be no-body's intereſt, ſo much as hers, to give him ſuch advice as would moſt turn to his advantage, and prevent thoſe evils ſhe was apprehenſive of. *It is certain* (ſaid ſhe) *that the empire would require all your attention, but the office you alſo enjoy of prieſt of the Sun muſt neceſſarily take up part of your time. Two ſuch important Employments are too much for one perſon. Your zeal for Elagabulus is, without doubt, very commendable, but your care and concern for the welfare of the Empire cannot be leſs than your reſpect for that adorable Divinity. I agree with you, that all this is fatiguing and laborious, but nothing hinders you from laying part of the burden*

burden upon ſome other perſon, which would leave you more at leiſure to attend the ſervice of your god. Chuſe ſomebody you can depend upon, but take care how you truſt a ſtranger; it would be putting too great a confidence in him, for of all things you muſt beware of pitching upon ſuch a one as would be likely to engroſs all the authority to himſelf, and by degrees, employ the power you have put into his hands againſt yourſelf. Look out for ſome one in your own family upon whom you may ſafely rely.

There is Prince Alexian your couſn, than whom I think no body better qualified in every reſpect, and from whom you have nothing to fear. For, beſides that he is too young to give you any jealouſy, he has the honour to be related to you, and conſequently cannot but have your intereſts at heart.

The Emperor who had yet ſome remains of deference for his grandmother, eſpecially when ſhe did not attempt to lay him under any reſtraint, approved the propoſal, and even looked upon it as a great inſtance of her love and affection for him. He carried Alexian to the Senate, where he declared that he adopted the young Prince for his ſon. He gave him the name of Alexander, made him Cæſar and Conſul, and proteſted that it was his god Elagabulus that had inſpired him with this thought. The ſenate authoriſed his choice, and the people heard it with great joy.

After Heliogabalus had adopted Alexander, he thought he had a right to require what he pleaſed of him, and becauſe he had aſſociated him in the Empire, he was reſolved he ſhould imitate him in his follies. Mamea, the young Prince's mother, on the contrary, laboured in ſecret to give him good notions, and to keep him at a diſtance from all the pleaſures, or rather madneſſes of the Emperor. Se was a woman of a ſober and regular conduct, and employed all her time in giving her

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ſon a good education, ſhe had no hand in her ſiſter's debaucheries, ſo that her reputation was as illuſtrious as that of Soémias was infamous. She acquired great experience in affairs with Mæſa her mother, who during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, had a great ſhare in the government. Theſe two Emperors very much eſteemed Mamea on account of her wiſdom and other valuable qualities, and Caracalla ſuffered her ſtill to enjoy the rank and honours ſhe had been entituled to when married to Marcian, tho' in ſtrictneſs, ſhe had forfeited them by her ſecond marriage with Claudius Julian, who was of an inferior degree. But nothing did her ſo much honour as the care ſhe took to inſpire her ſon with ſentiments of moderation and humanity; and to make him hate all thoſe diverſions that were inconſiſtent with purity and decency, by giving him, privately, ſuch good leſſons and advice, as ſerved for an antedote againſt the infectious example and diſcourſe of Heliogabalus, who ſeemed determined to make him a partner in his vices, as he had done in his dignity. She had, further, the precaution to cauſe maſters and preceptors to come to him ſecretly, who taught him the ſciences, and all the exerciſes that were becoming his rank and quality, and formed his tender mind to virtue, in ſpite of all the Emperor's attempts to make him in love with thoſe low, ſhameful, and contemptible occupations, in which he himſelf employed his time, and for which Alexander ſhewed a great averſion.

As nothing more binds and cements friendſhip than a conformity of ſentiments and inclinations, ſo nothing is more apt to diſunite than a difference in tempers and humours. Heliogabalus and Alexander were born with characters quite oppoſite to each other; ſo that it would have been very uncommon if there had been a perfect agreement between them.

them. Accordingly, the Emperor, not finding in his collegue that gout for the ſhameful pleaſures, groſs amuſements, and frequent cruelties that he himſelf was ſo fond of, began to hate, and repented that he had adopted, him. The peoples affection for the young Prince much increaſed his jealouſy and diſlike, ſo that he was determined to deſtroy his partner. He commanded Alexander's officers and domeſticks, either to maſſacre or poiſon him; but found them ſo faithful to their maſter, that neither his threats nor promiſes could influence them. Beſides, Mamea was ſo vigilant and ſo continually upon her guard againſt the Emperor's plots and deſigns, that ſhe would never ſuffer her ſon to eat or drink any thing that came from Heliogabalus, or thoſe belonging to him, being very careful to have all his proviſions dreſſed by her own ſervants on whom ſhe could ſafely depend; and, that Alexander might have it in his power to ingratiate himſelf with the troops, ſhe furniſhed him with money to diſtribute among them. This liberality gained him, indeed, the affection of the ſoldiers, but then it irritated Heliogabalus more and more againſt him, for he knew that by theſe means Alexander was endeavouring to debauch the legions; ſo he heſitated no longer about putting him to death, but reſolved to do it at any rate, and that Mamea ſhould be ſerved the ſame way for being, as he ſuſpected, the author of theſe doings; but, not content with taking away his life, he would needs degrade him in the firſt place, and ſtrip him of the name which he had given him at his adoption, together with the title of Cæſar. In effect he ſent people to eraſe his name and titles out of all inſcriptions where they had been put.

This enterpriſe ended in a quite different manner from what Heliogabalus intended, for as ſoon

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as the above orders began to be put in execution, the ſoldiers mutinied, and flocked to the palace to defend Alexander, who, they no longer doubted, would fall a ſacrifice to the Emperor's reſentment; and being informed that Heliogabalus was retired to another palace, they ran thither to aſſaſſinate him, and would have done it if Antiochitius, colonel of the prætorian cohorts, had not put a ſtop to their fury, by reminding them of the oath they had taken to Heliogabalus, and which they were going to violate by murdering him. They were even forced to carry Alexander into the camp to convince the ſoldiers of his being alive. Thus this wicked Emperor, by attempting to deſtroy his couſin, did him the greateſt ſervice in the world, contrary to his intentions.

This evident token, however, of the ſoldiers affection for Alexander, provoked Heliogabalus beyond all meaſure. He looked upon this ſedition as the moſt violent attack upon his authority, and upon his couſin as his moſt formidable enemy. The more he perceived the ſoldiers loved him, ſo much the more did his hatred increaſe. He was ſo little able to conceal his averſion for the young Prince, that he could not help ſhewing it upon every occaſion, particularly the firſt day of the year, at which time Alexander, as conſul, was to attend the Emperor to the ſenate, and then to the Capitol, to perform the uſual ceremonies. Heliogabalus had a mind to go thither alone, and not permit that his couſin ſhould bear him company. Mæſa and Soémias repreſented to him *that ſo glaring and inveterate a hatred would entirely alienate from him the love of the people; that by ſo impolitick a conduct he acted againſt his own intereſts inſtead of hurting the Prince. That ſo ſcandalous a miſunderſtanding (the whole blame of which would certainly fall upon him) would furniſh the ſoldiers*

ſoldiers with a pretence to revolt, which he ought by all means to prevent, as they ſeemed but too ripe for it already. That in ſo delicate a conjuncture, he ought to be very careful how he omitted or changed any thing of the antient cuſtoms.

Theſe remonſtrances intimidated the Emperor, and put him ſo upon reflecting, that after having for a long time reſiſted the intreaties of the two Princeſſes, he determined about noon, to go to the ſenate with Alexander and Mæſa, who took her place there as uſual, but obſtinately perſiſted in his reſolution not to go to the Capitol, to deprive Alexander of the honour of making the accuſtomed ſacrifices upon that occaſion, where the conſuls were to appear in all their pomp and ſplendour, but which he cauſed to be performed by the governour of the town, as if the conſuls had been abſent. Their having prevailed upon the Emperor to carry Alexander with him to the ſenate, was however, ſo great a force upon his inclinations, that he was reſolved he ſhould periſh, whatever inconveniency it might be attended with.

His jealouſy inſpired him with theſe violent reſolutions, and fortified him at firſt againſt whatever might happen, but his timidity ſoon weakened his firſt deſign, and made him apprehenſive of the conſequences. He could not doubt but the ſenate and the armies, having the greateſt affection for Alexander, would not leave his death unpuniſhed; but on the other hand he flattered himſelf that if the deed were once done, Alexander's moſt zealous friends, having nothing further to hope from him, would not give themſelves much trouble about revenging his blood. In this ſtate of irreſolution, he thought he could not do better than to ſound the people, and try what their ſentiments would be if they imagined that Alexander

der was dead. For which purpoſe he kept the Prince within the palace, and gave out that he was dying. This news being ſpread in a moment all over the town, ſtruck a general conſternation into the people. Nothing was to be heard but murmurings and threats. The ſoldiers flocked together, refuſed to mount the ordinary guard at the palace, and ſhutting themſelves up in their camp, came to a reſolution to go directly to the Emperor and oblige him to deliver up Alexander to them.

This terrified the Emperor, and fearing that he had carried the matter too far, he conducted Alexander into the camp, accompanied by Soémias and Mamea. As ſoon as the Prince appeared, the ſoldiers ſhouted for joy, and, by the ardent vows they put up for his proſperity, ſufficiently ſhewed how much they had it at heart; at the ſame time remaining quite ſilent as to the Emperor. This was new matter of diſcontent for Heliogabalus, and the ſoldiers preferring Alexander's welfare ſo much before his, exaſperated him to that degree that the next morning he aſſembled the ſenate, and condemned to death thoſe that had appeared moſt zealous in behalf of the Prince.

This ill-timed ſeverity was his ruin; the whole camp mutinied, and tho' the Emperor had proſcribed only thoſe whom he thought were moſt guilty, the others could not ſee their comrades ſacrificed to his fury without apprehending the like treatment. They unanimouſly cried out that it was high time to deſtroy the tyrant and raiſe Alexander to the throne. Nothing is more dangerous than the firſt tranſports of a popular inſurrection: it is a torrent that carries all before it. The Emperor ſeeing his life in danger, was inclined to have recourſe to flight, but being in the thick of the

the camp, from whence it was no eaſy matter to extricate himſelf, he implored the aſſiſtance of thoſe about him. The colonel of the guards, Hierocles, and ſome others that had accompanied him, made ſome efforts to defend him againſt Alexander's ſoldiers, and this ſkirmiſh in a little time became a battle. Soémias and Mamea perceiving that the fortune of their reſpective parties depended upon the iſſue of this fight, ſeparated; each putting herſelf at the head of her own friends, and performing the part of general, encouraging her ſoldiers with promiſes of reward, and endeavouring to corrupt thoſe of her adverſary, ſo that theſe two ſiſters were ſeen labouring to the utmoſt of their power to procure each other's deſtruction.

During the combat Heliogabalus hid himſelf in a place where were thrown all the excrements and filth of the camp, and whither Soémias his mother followed him, when ſhe found that her party was beaten; but Alexander's ſoldiers, looking diligently about for him, found him at laſt, and maſſacred him in the arms of Soémias, who held him faſt as it were to protect him, and afterwards killed her, in like manner, with their poniards. The ſenate were in raptures of joy at the news of his death, and the firſt decree they made, was, that no woman ſhould ever be permitted to ſit in the ſenate. Such was the end of the infamous Heliogabalus, and better could not be expected from his abominable life. It was foretold him, that he ſhould periſh miſerably by a violent and untimely death, and in order to diſappoint any that ſhould attack him, he carried about him ſilken cords to hang himſelf with, a ſilver poniard to ſtab himſelf, and poiſon in a gold box, that he might chuſe what kind of death he liked beſt. He

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alſo cauſed to be built, a high tower, in which he might take ſhelter in caſe of neceſſity, which he paved with ſilver, and enriched with diamonds and precious ſtones, that if he ſhould rather chuſe to caſt himſelf from top to bottom than any of the other methods, it might be ſaid that his death was magnificent.

Hiſtory makes no further mention of the Empreſſes Fauſtina, Cornelia, and Severa.

The daughter of VARIUS MARCIANUS,

MEMMIA,

SALUSTIA, BARBIA, ORBIANA,

Wives of ALEXANDER SEVERUS,

MAMEA, *Mother of that Emperor.*

AFTER Heliogabalus had been killed in the camp of the Prætorians, the ſoldiers proclaimed young Alexander auguſt, and attended him to the Palace. A more univerſal joy was never ſeen at Rome, where each particular perſon ſeemed to promiſe himſelf all poſſible happineſs by the Prince's election. At the ſame time that the ſenate declared him Emperor, they gave him the titles of auguſt, and father of the republick. They were alſo inclined to honour him with the ſirname of Antoninus, and the Title of *Great*, which had been given to Alexander of Macedon, but the young Prince refuſed it with a modeſty that made him more worthy of it. It is certain, that if Alexander had reaſon to be well pleaſed at the zeal and affection that all the orders of the town expreſſed in his behalf; it muſt be alſo confeſſed, that never Prince of his age gave better proofs of his being worthy of it. As to his perſon, he was very tall, well made, and of a moſt agreeable countenance, in which was ſomething ſo manly and war-like, that it beſpoke the love and reſpect of all that approached him. His eyes were ſo lively and ſparkling, that people could not bear he ſhould look ſtedfaſtly at them. The endowments of his mind were nothing inferior to his corporal perfections; for, in him all the virtues were united in an eminent degree. He was mild, affable, modeſt, humble; an enemy to vice

vice and vicious people; as careful to make others do juſtice as he was to do it himſelf. To theſe noble inclinations, nature had added an apt and docile diſpoſition, which made him intirely ſubmiſſive to the advice of thoſe who were entruſted with his education; and who, not meeting with any bad habits in this young Prince to ſtruggle with, had nothing to do but to cultivate and bring to maturity the good ſeed which had been ſown in ſo grateful a ſoil.

Alexander was but thirteen years old when he came to the Empire. The ſenate decreed to Mamea, his mother, the title of auguſt, that of mother of the republick, and all thoſe honours which they had ſo prodigally beſtowed upon the wives and mothers of the Emperors. But it muſt be acknowledged, that though many of thoſe Princeſſes were unworthy of the pompous and magnificent honours that had been decreed them, they were no more than what Mamea deſerved. She was exceedingly ſtrict and prudent in her behaviour, having * never, in her whole life, taken any ſtep that could give the leaſt room to call her virtue in queſtion. She had the great advantage of being inſtructed in the Chriſtian religion, and for which ſhe was obliged to the pains and endeavours of Origen.

This excellent perſon was employed in preaching the Goſpel at Alexandria, when Mamea was at Antioch with the Empreſs Julia her aunt. His great reputation, and the novelty of his doctrine, excited Mamea's curioſity ſo much, that ſhe ſent for him to Antioch, received him with great marks of eſteem, and had many conferences with him about the religion which he taught. Origen ſpared no pains to convert the Princeſs, who might greatly contribute

* Euſeb. Hiſt. 6. 15, Nicephor. Call. Hiſt. 5. c 17.

contribute to the advancement of the Goſpel, and gave her, in ſhort, thoſe good notions and ſentiments which ſhe afterwards communicated to her ſon Alexander, who had always a great regard for the Chriſtians.

It muſt be owned, that the good leſſons and inſtructions of Origen did not diveſt Mamea of all her paſſions, nor extinguiſh her ambition; for as ſhe was inſatiably greedy of power and authority, ſhe was not content with aſſuming to herſelf all that which properly belonged to the Emperor, but alſo envied the Empreſs, her daughter-in-law, the little ſhadow of ſovereignty that was allowed her, and perſecuted her with great injuſtice.

Theſe imperfections ſeem indeed to contradict the aſſertion of thoſe who aſſure us, that ſhe was a Chriſtian; but how many Chriſtians do we ſee that have not been ſo happy as to get the better of their paſſions?

Mamea was, however, very deſerving of the honours the ſenate had decreed her, were it only upon account of the good education ſhe had given her ſon, and the care ſhe took to place no perſons about him but ſuch as were of known virtue and integrity. People of corrupt lives found no admittance into the palace, and eſpecially thoſe debauched inſtruments of Heliogabalus's ſhameful pleaſures and cruelties were ſtrictly prohibited. She baniſhed all flatterers, that poiſonous race of vermin with which courts are often infected, and whoſe pernicious councils are capable of ſeducing even the beſt diſpoſed people. She did not ſtop here; for being perſuaded that nothing is more pernicious, nor a greater encourager of vice, than idleneſs, ſhe was very careful to keep him well employed in ſuch occupations as ſhould not afford him leiſure to run into thoſe amuſements that might have been prejudicial to him; for which

reaſon ſhe choſe to be generally preſent when he was adminiſtring juſtice, or regulating the affairs of the empire.

It is certain that Mamea could not poſſibly take wiſer precautions; but, on the other hand, it muſt be owned that the young Prince's good diſpoſitions made her work very eaſy and agreeable. What a ſurpriſing progreſs will education make upon a perſon ſo well inclined as Alexander! He was very attentive to the good advice of his mother and his preceptors, and followed it exactly. He ſhewed the greateſt zeal for the publick good, and made excellent regulations for the government of the empire. One of the firſt things he did was to aboliſh the odd and fantaſtical worſhip of the god Elagabalus, and ſent back to Emeſſa the ſtone for which Heliogabalus had ſo ridiculous a veneration. He ſoon gave the town quite another appearance, by reforming the abuſes that his predeceſſors had either introduced or connived at. He reſtored to the ſenate their ancient ſplendor and dignity, by placing in it ſuch perſons, as, by their merit and birth, were worthy of that honour, and by turning out thoſe infamous people that Heliogabalus had put in. In his reign no other qualifications were neceſſary to recommend to employments, than honour and probity: for Alexander (deaf to all conſiderations of friendſhip and kindred in the diſtribution of important poſts) regarded nothing but merit and virtue.

Mæſa had the ſatisfaction to ſee theſe happy beginnings of her grandſon's reign; and it muſt be acknowledged, that ſhe had very much contributed to his noble ſentiments and inclinations by her good advice: She died ſoon after in a very advanced age *. Alexander procured her immortality, and all thoſe ſuperſtitious honours that were uſually

* Herodian. lib. 6.

uſually given to the mothers and wives of Emperors: He was not unmindful of the obligations he had to this Princeſs, in prevailing upon Heliogabulus to adopt him.

The death of Mæſa engaged Mamea in new troubles, for as the former of theſe ladies had been a very active and vigilant guard upon all the young Emperor's actions and behaviour; ſo it now became more immediately incumbent upon her to ſupply that loſs. To cultivate his mind with that attention that was neceſſary, and at the ſame time to take care of all the affairs of the empire, were no indifferent occupations; her endeavours were, however, attended with ſuch ſucceſs, that, in ſpite of thoſe who rail at the government of women, it may be affirmed, that the town and provinces were never ruled with more wiſdom and prudence. As ſhe was perſuaded that nothing was ſo dangerous and apt to ſeduce a young man, as being inveſted with abſolute power, ſhe choſe out (in conjunction with the ſenate) ſixteen perſons, the moſt remarkable for gravity *, experience, and purity of manners, whoſe buſineſs it was to protect him againſt thoſe vices and failings to which the impetuoſity of youth is liable, and the pernicious infection of flatterers. Ulpian, a famous lawyer, who was without diſpute the principal perſon of that ſelect body of men, was particularly zealous in the buſineſs he undertook, and became ſo great a favourite with the Emperor, that Mamea began to be jealous of him; for ſhe could not bear that her ſon ſhould have ſo great an eſteem for any body but herſelf; but perceiving at laſt that Ulpian gave the Emperor no advice but what was ſalutary and diſcreet, ſhe laboured herſelf for the advancement of that great man, and defended him againſt ſome mutinous ſoldiers, who, not be-

* Lamprid. in Alex. Herodian. lib. 6.

ing able to endure the authority that he aſſumed over them, would have killed him. She alſo made him colonel of the Prætorian guards, which dignity, afterwards, coſt him his life. The authority of theſe governors was, however, ſubordinate to hers; for Mamea did not ſuffer her ſon to be guided by them, but in proportion to their conforming themſelves to her directions; and the Emperor paid ſo blind and implicit an obedience to his mother, that he followed her advice even when he could not approve of it, for which he has been much blamed. People have reproached him * with being ſuch a ſlave to his mother's opinion, as to have been often, thereby, prevailed upon to act quite contrary to his glory and intereſt.

The vigilance of theſe grave ſenators, who were as ſo many Arguſes to watch the Emperor's conduct, did not appear to Mamea to be a ſufficient guard againſt the temptations and violent ſallies of youth; ſhe therefore thought it neceſſary, in order to prevent his running into criminal pleaſures, to procure him ſuch as were lawful. She determined to marry him, though he was but about 15 years of age, and was of opinion, that her own intereſt required that ſhe ſhould take this ſtep; for as ſhe gratified her ambition by enjoying the ſovereign authority without controul, ſo ſhe took it for granted, that any daughter-in-law of her chuſing, would lie under ſuch obligations to her, as to be very well ſatisfied with whatever ſhare of power ſhe was pleaſed to allow her, and pitched upon a relation of her firſt huſband for that purpoſe.

Varius Marcianus, a near relation of Alexander's father, had a daughter no leſs remarkable for the beauties of her mind than thoſe of her perſon; and though ſhe could not boaſt of a very illuſtrious ex-

* Herodian. Julian. Auguſt. Cæſ.

extraction, ſhe was always reckoned upon a level with the moſt noble perſons in the empire, on account of the many important victories of her father in Illyria, as well as the honour ſhe had of being allied to the imperial family. Mamea flattering herſelf that it would be in her power to govern her as ſhe did her ſon, propoſed this affair to Alexander, who never having been accuſtomed to contradict his mother, made no objection to the match. The ſenate, with great pleaſure and ſatisfaction, decreed her the title of auguſt, and all the other marks of their reſpect that had been conferred upon the Empreſſes her predeceſſors, which Mamea was very well ſatisfied with, as it did honour to her choice. We ſhall, however, find by the ſequel, that theſe titles, particularly that of auguſt, occaſioned a miſunderſtanding between the two Princeſſes that was attended with fatal conſequences.

Theſe nuptials being celebrated, Mamea reſolved to look out for a proper huſband for the Princeſs Theoclea her daughter, and determined in favour of the ſon of Maximinus, who, from a ſhepherd, became a ſoldier, and chief of a legion which Alexander had given him the command of, after having made him a ſenator; not knowing that in this officer he was heaping favours upon his murderer. Maximinus, the father, was, without diſpute, a good ſoldier, and brave officer, but of a rough, unpolite diſpoſition, that favoured of the rudeneſs and barbarity of his nation, and the lowneſs of his birth. It is reported, that his ſon Maximus was more civilized, but at the ſame time more proud and inſolent. It was, however, to him that Mamea reſolved to give her daughter; but as the Emperor, her ſon, was not then at Rome, ſhe communicated her deſign to him by letter. Alexander did not like it; for as he was

very fond of his ſiſter, he was apprehenſive that the Princeſs, who had been brought up at Court, and perfectly well educated, could never be reconciled to the ſour and moroſe tempers of the Maximins; but as he had the greateſt complaiſance for his mother, he contented himſelf with repreſenting to her that he could not, indeed, but acknowledge that Maximinus was a good officer, and that he had a great regard for his merit; but that he had ſomething ſo diſagreeable in his manners and perſon, as neither the air of the court, nor his having been ſo long in the army, had been able to correct. That the Princeſs, his ſiſter, having been uſed to the Græcian cuſtoms, and always in the polite world, would find it extremely difficult to take up with a father-in-law of ſuch a character. That though the ſon was of a diſpoſition ſomething more tolerable, yet he did not think it reaſonable, that a Princeſs, with her accompliſhments, ſhould be matched to a perſon, that, in his opinion, was not equal to her in any reſpect, particularly with regard to his temper. That ſince ſhe was inclined to marry her daughter, he thought ſhe could not find a more ſuitable perſon than Meſſala, who was a Roman of illuſtrious birth, adorned with all the good qualities that could be deſired, and who, in all probability, would, one day, make a conſiderable figure in his military capacity. He added, nevertheleſs, that he did not pretend to oppoſe her inclination; but, on the contrary, left her at full liberty to act as ſhe thought proper. It is very likely, that Mamea approved of her ſon's arguments, ſince ſhe made no further mention of this marriage.

Though Alexander loved his wife extreamly, he did not give himſelf up to the pleaſures of marriage, ſo as to neglect the welfare of the ſtate, which was always the principal object of his care. He

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ſuppreſſed ſome of the taxes, and leſſened others, and never put his private intereſt in competition with that of the publick. As for the arts and ſciences, he drew them out of the contemptible ſituation his predeceſſor had left them in, by honouring with his protection and liberality, thoſe great men whoſe genius's and learning he admired. He founded ſchools *, in which he ſettled all ſorts of profeſſors, and gave penſions to a certain number of ſcholars, who were of quality, but poor.

He erected many ſumptuous buildings, and repaired others, adorning the town with a great number of ſtatues. But what ingratiated him moſt of all with the people, was his eſteem for thoſe who behaved well, and the care he took to puniſh ſuch as deſerved chaſtiſement, eſpecially thoſe who were corrupt or partial, inſtead of adminiſtring juſtice, in which caſe he never pardoned, though it were his beſt friends. His palace was open to all thoſe that were diſtinguiſhed for virtue and goodneſs; but ſuch as were of a contrary character he could not endure. He carried that matter ſo far, that, according to the hiſtorians, he would not permit people of an indifferent reputation to pay their reſpects to his wife nor his mother, as if there had been ſomething infectious about them. He was a ſtrict obſerver of juſtice; but, at the ſame time, his ſeverity was always tempered with mildneſs and clemency; for during his whole reign, he never ordered any perſon to be put to death, leaving capital crimes to the determination of the ſenate. No flatterers could gain admittance to him, as he looked upon them to be the moſt dangerous enemies. As he was ſincere in his words and actions, he deteſted cunning and artifice; but, above all, he hated

* Lamprid.

thoſe, who, having great employments, made a traffick of their credit and intereſt; for in thoſe times, as well as the preſent, there were perſons at court who received money and preſents for ſervices which they promiſed to do, but never did. Very ready to give good words, and would undertake to obtain, from the Emperor or his miniſters, favours and employments, which they forgot as ſoon as the petitioner was out of ſight. Vetronius Turinus excelled in this trade. He had inſinuated himſef * in ſuch a manner into the good graces of the Emperor, that he was become his chief favourite, though he had very little to recommend him. To ſay the truth, Alexander put ſuch a confidence in this man, who had no one good quality, as did but ſmall honour to his character; for the publick, who did not find out in Turinus that merit that might be expected from the high degree of favour he was in, thought Alexander either not ſo judicious as he ought to be, or too complaiſant. Turinus, in the mean time, loſt no opportunity of making the moſt of his intereſt, and did not ſcruple to receive money from all thoſe that had favours to aſk, and addreſſed themſelves to him. He encouraged the people as much as poſſible to apply to him, and boaſted that he could do what he pleaſed with the Emperor, promiſing them ſucceſs with ſo much aſſurance, that whoever was ſo happy as to gain his friendſhip, made no doubt of obtaining all they could wiſh for. It was, however, but very ſeldom that he gave himſelf any trouble about thoſe whoſe money and preſents he had received; but if they happened to ſucceed, by whatever means it was, he took the merit of it to himſelf.

Alexander had ſome ſuſpicion of this commerce, and was extremely provoked at it; but being determined

* Lamprid. in Alex.

termined to find out the truth, he ordered a perſon who requeſted a favour of him, to apply himſelf to Turinus, and then to come and let him know what paſſed. Turinus did not fail, as uſual, to promiſe to recommend his affair to the Emperor; and ſoon after, having met the petitioner, he aſſured him that his buſineſs was in a very good way, and he did not doubt but he ſhould ſucceed upon a ſecond application; but gave him to underſtand, that he did not employ his intereſt gratis. The other obliged himſelf before witneſſes to pay him a great ſum of money.

The Emperor was acquainted with the whole tranſaction; he granted the favour required, and for which Turinus received payment, tho' he had done nothing to intitle him to it. Alexander having got all the information he wanted, ordered Turinus to be apprehended, and that all who had any thing to alledge againſt him ſhould be heard. The conſequence of which was, that he was convicted of innumerable acts of this kind. He was condemned to be tied to a gallows, under which was kindled hay and green wood, which ſmothered him to death. The crime he had committed, was called ſelling of ſmoke; ſo that his puniſhment was conformable to his guilt.

Alexander, however, drew a uſeful leſſon from this iniquitous proceeding of Turinus: it taught him not to truſt any body with his ſecrets for the future, except Ulpian, whoſe fidelity he knew he could depend upon; nor to permit any other perſon to ſolicit favours. By this commendable behaviour, together with his affability and modeſty, he acquired the love and eſteem of all the world. He would never permit any body to call him Lord; and his humility was ſuch, that he uſed to viſit his friends familiarly, and inviting himſelf to their houſes, would ſit down among

them without ceremony or diſtinction, acting leſs like an Emperor than a private perſon. At his table was ſerved nothing but what was common, and all thoſe who were remarkable for probity and goodneſs, were admitted to it with as much freedom as if he had been their equal.

If this excellent Prince could not be reproached with pride or luxury, as to precedence and eating, neither was he ever accuſed of any exceſs in his apparel, which was always plain, without jewels or embroidery; he ſeldom went to the expence of ſilk garments, his virtue being his chief ornament. This frugality ſerved as a model to his courtiers and all perſons of diſtinction, who were aſhamed to fare more delicately than the Emperor himſelf. The ladies had the ſame example to follow in the Empreſs by Alexander's direction; for an ambaſſador from the eaſt having preſented her with two pearls of an extraordinary ſize and weight, * the Emperor would not permit her to wear them, ſaying, he would never conſent that his wife ſhould introduce the pernicious cuſtom of wearing rich jewels; ſo he ordered them to be ſold at auction.

The Empreſs could have wiſhed that Alexander had been leſs rigid than he was upon this occaſion. It was not without a very ſenſible concern, that ſhe ſaw the pearls that were intended to adorn her perſon, likely to paſs into other hands; but ſhe had not that mortification, for no body offered to bid for them. †. Whether it was that the price was exceſſive, or that people were afraid to encourage an extravagance that the Emperor took ſo much pains to diſcountenance, ſo the pearls were brought back to the Empreſs, tho' ſhe had not the ſatisfaction of making uſe of them;

* Lamprid. vit. Alex. † Lamprid.

them; for Alexander ſent them to the ſtatue of Venus.

The Emperor's zeal to ſuppreſs luxury was the more worthy of praiſe, as it did not proceed from ſordid avarice, a vice unworthy of a great Prince, but from the moſt conſummate prudence; for, by retrenching ſuperfluous expences, he was always in a capacity to defray the charges of neceſſary occaſions, and then it was that he diſplay'd his magnificence and generoſity. In effect, he blamed covetouſneſs as much as prodigality, and did not, as hiſtory informs us, ſpare his mother upon that article; for, perceiving that ſhe had recourſe to ſcandalous, and ſometimes unlawful methods to heap up money, he told her one day, in a reſpectful manner,* that ſo great an œconomy did not become a Princeſs of her rank, who ought on the contrary, to be liberal and beneficent. That he could not conceive what uſe ſhe intended to make of the treaſure ſhe was ſcraping up with ſo much pains and trouble, and by ſuch ways and means, as did not appear to all the world to be ſtrictly conſiſtent with innocence.

Mamea, who never wanted preſence of mind, was not at a loſs for a ſpecious and plauſible pretence for her avarice. She repreſented to her ſon that money, being the ſinews of the ſtate, and the very ſoul of affairs, particular regard was to be had to it. That ſhe did not lock up her money in her coffers for her own private advantage, but to employ it to good purpoſe upon occaſion. That if the ſoldiers, who are continually given to change, ſhould revolt againſt him, there was no ſpeedier or more effectual method to bring them back to their duty, than by a ſeaſonable diſtribution of money. That a well-tim'd bounty among the legions, would maintain them in their fidelity;

* Herodian. lib. 6.

ty; for that the troops would never fail to adhere to that ſide where moſt money was to be got, and in ſhort, that it was in order to prevent or extinguiſh rebellions, that ſhe gathered thoſe riches he reproached her with.

Theſe reaſons ſeemed very ſubſtantial, but did not ſatisfy Alexander, who was not deſirous to gain the good will and affection of the ſoldiers upon ſuch conditions. He looked upon this extraordinary precaution of his mother to be unworthy of the glory of his reign, and was of opinion that the more the legions were intereſted, the more they were to be ſuſpected.

If Mamea's covetouſneſs gave Alexander a great deal of vexation, her ambition was not leſs uneaſy to him.

She had received from the ſenate all the honours that flattery could invent, and even more than had ever been conferred upon the wives or mothers of any of the preceding Emperors. They had decreed her, not only the title of Auguſt, but alſo that of * Mother of the armies, of the ſenate, and of the republick, which were beyond what any of the other Empreſſes had deſired; ſo it might reaſonably be imagined that this was ſufficient to gratify her vanity: it was all, however, too little to cure her of the ridiculous jealouſy ſhe had conceived at her daughter-in-law's enjoying the title of Auguſt, which ſhe thought was due only to herſelf. She ought to have conſidered that an empty title was all ſhe had to boaſt of, for Mamea engroſſed all the power and authority to ſuch a degree, as to do and order every thing according to her own will and pleaſure. This unbounded ambition put her upon treating the young Empreſs in a moſt inhuman manner, for without having the leaſt regard either to her rank, or to the love her

* Spon. Miſcel.

her huſband had for her, or in ſhort to common decency and good manners, ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be ſo hurried away by her paſſion, as to uſe this unfortunate Princeſs extremely ill, and perſecute her cruelly *.

Alexander had never been in ſo diſagreeable a ſituation; this miſunderſtanding, between his mother and his wife, gave him a great deal of trouble; for if he had taken part with Mamea he muſt have ſacrificed a moſt amiable wife that loved him above all things; and, on the other hand, he could not think of contradicting his mother, to whom he owed his fortune. The Empreſs was very ſenſible of the vexation theſe diſputes muſt needs give her huſband, and was ſo prudent as not to require that he ſhould declare for her; but that ſhe might not be expoſed to Mamea's envy and ill nature, ſhe quitted the palace and retired to her father's-houſe, imagining that by this voluntary baniſhment, ſhe ſhould ceaſe to give her mother-in-law any further jealouſy. This precaution was very diſcreet, but it did not ſatisfy Mamea, for wherever the young Empreſs was, ſhe was ſtill auguſt, and the Emperor's mother could not endure that any perſon but herſelf ſhould enjoy that title. She did not therefore ſuffer the Empreſs to be quiet in her retreat, but on the contrary, found means to perſecute her even there; and not content with that, ſhe could not help ſhewing marks of her indignation to Marcianus, the Empreſs's father, having been informed that he was much diſpleaſed at the injuſtice and cruelty of Mamea towards his daughter.

Marcianus was not courtier enough to have learnt the art of diſſimulation: he could not be an indifferent ſpectator of the ill uſage his daughter met with; ſo thinking it to no purpoſe to complain

* Herodian. lib. 6.

plain to Alexander of Mamea, who kept him in the utmoſt ſubjection, and perhaps puſhed on by his ambition as well as reſentment, he formed a conſpiracy againſt his ſon-in-law *.

The rank he held in the Empire facilitated this bold undertaking, for, beſides the honour he had acquired by his victories, he was promoted, by the Emperor his ſon-in-law, to the greateſt employments, and was become very conſiderable by his near alliance with Alexander. Thus, depending on the great authority he had in the army, he took refuge in the prætorian camp as if to avoid the perſecutions of Mamea; he there exaggerated the unlimited ambition of that Princeſs, who in the name of her ſon, exerciſed a tyrannical power, and whoſe envy and jealouſy was arrived to ſuch a pitch, that ſhe could not indure that the Empreſs ſhould take the title of auguſt, which the the ſenate had decreed her, which all the orders of the empire had given her, and which was due to the Emperor's wife. After having done all that was poſſible to irritate the ſoldiers againſt Mamea, he put himſelf under their protection; but this ſcheme did not ſucceed according to his intention, for the troops were too fond of Mamea to conſent to any thing contrary to her intereſts. Marcianus, by this ſtep, only diſcovered his deſign, and drew upon himſelf more and more the indignation of Mamea, to which he ſoon after fell a victim. Inſtead of prevailing upon the ſoldiers to eſpouſe his cauſe and revolt in his favour, as he was in hopes would be the caſe, he expiated his raſhneſs by his death. The Empreſs partook of her father's misfortunes, which ſhe had been innocently the occaſion of, and was baniſhed into Africa, whither ſhe carried only the empty ſhadow of that grandeur and vain title that had occaſioned her diſgrace,

* Lamprid. Herodian.

grace. Alexander, as dearly as he loved her, had not the reſolution to exert his authority in behalf of this unfortunate Princeſs. He ſaw her condemned to an unjuſt and rigorus baniſhment, without being able to afford her any other relief than his ſorrow and affliction.

Hiſtory does not inform us whether the Empreſs died in exile, but we are told that Alexander married a ſecond wife, who in all appearance, was choſen by Mamea, and was probably ſuch a one as did not inſiſt upon the title of Auguſt. This lady's name was Memmia, daughter to the conſul Sulpicius, and grand-daughter to Catulus. The ſenate did not fail to decree her the title of auguſt *, as may be ſeen by her medals, but it is taken for granted that ſhe did not accept of it, for fear of bringing upon herſelf the misfortunes of the preceding Empreſs. She was not however, exempt from pride and haughtineſs, for it went much againſt her inclinations that the Emperor ſhould go to the publick baths, and mix familiarly with people of low degree, diveſting himſelf of all his pomp and grandeur; as if this humility, ſo charming and commendable in a Prince, was any real diminution of his glory. But Alexander was far above this poor way of thinking, and when his mother and his wife reproached him with his too great condeſcenſion (as they called it,) he anſwered, that by ſeeming to abaſe himſelf, he was in reality exalted, and his authority ſo much the more eſtabliſhed. In effect, his ſweetneſs of temper and affability procured him ſo much the affection of the ſoldiers, that there was nothing they would not do to ſerve him, while at liberty to act according to their own inclinations, and uninfluenced by traytors. This was ſufficiently proved in his wars with Artaxerxes King of Perſia,

* Lamprid.

Perſia, who became formidable to Rome by his victories.

This new conqueror was a Perſian by birth; of no family, but poſſeſſed of all thoſe talents that were neceſſary to make a great man. After he had made himſelf general of the army, he attacked the Parthians, beat them, and having killed their King Artabanes, ruined their monarchy, and re-eſtabliſhed the government that Alexander of Macedon had aboliſhed. Theſe ſucceſſes ſo raiſed his hopes and expectations, that he flattered himſelf with no leſs than the recovering whatever had belonged to the kings of Perſia, and retaking all the dominions the Romans had in Aſia. As arrogance naturally follows good fortune, this monarch, who was ſo proud of his victories, as to take upon him the title of king of kings, and to look down upon other potentates as his ſlaves; wrote to all the neighbouring princes, that they ſhould either furniſh him with the uſual auxiliary troops or prepare for deſtruction. Theſe threats terrified the weakeſt and moſt timid of the Princes, but ſome there were, who did not yield till after a vigorous reſiſtance; and Alſawad, * one of theſe oriental kings, would perhaps have been able himſelf, to have made all the vaſt deſigns of this brutal conqueror prove abortive, if he had not been betrayed by the very perſon he thought he had leaſt reaſon to be apprehenſive of. It was his daughter who was guilty of this horrible perfidiouſneſs. This Princeſs, dazzled with Artaxerxes's triumphs and the extent of his power, was not aſhamed to deliver up her father and her country to their bittereſt enemy.

Artaxerxes had beſieged Alſawad in a fortreſs, before which he had the mortification to waſte a great deal of time, and deſtroy a conſiderable part of

* Lutych. ann.

of his army without making any progreſs. He was not for all that, diſcouraged; for the reſiſtance he met with was ſo far from making him raiſe the ſiege, that it the more determined him to take the fort at any rate. But as he was not leſs cunning than brave, he had recourſe to craft where his good fortune failed. He knew that Alſawad had a daughter that was marriageable, and not doubting but the Princeſs would with great pleaſure liſten to a propoſal from him, he found means to inform her, that if ſhe would let him know the weakeſt part of the fortreſs, he would marry her, and raiſe her to the throne of Perſia. This flattering offer had the deſired effect.

Nothing is more apt to tempt and ſeduce a young girl that is nobly born, than a ſplendid marriage. The crown of Perſia did not appear to the Princeſs to be what ought to be neglected. She gave Artaxerxes a favourable anſwer by a billet ſhot from an arrow, and after the terms and conditions had been adjuſted by the help of theſe flying ambaſſadors, the Princeſs, who was as deſirous to take the Perſian as he was to take the fort, diſcovered to him a place through which he might make himſelf maſter of the caſtle without danger or trouble.

Artaxerxes immediately made the beſt uſe of the intelligence he had got, and meeting but with little reſiſtance, took the place. The Princeſs received, indeed, the reward of her treaſon, but it was not long before ſhe alſo underwent the puniſhment ſhe deſerved; for the barbarian, after he had married her, aſked her one day very cunningly, what ſort of treatment her father uſed to give her. The Princeſs who did not ſuſpect the ſnare that was laid for her, anſwered, that he had always loved her beyond any thing in the world, and had never given her the leaſt cauſe to be diſpleaſed.

Thou art then unworthy to live, replied the Perſian in a fury, for if thou haſt been unnatural enough to betray thy father who loved thee, and from whom, as thou haſt confeſſed, thou didſt never receive any diſpleaſure; what fidelity can I expect from thee? No, (continued he, caſting on her a look of indignation and contempt) I will not expoſe myſelf to thy treachery, and that which thou haſt been guilty of deſerves the moſt rigorous chaſtiſement. That inſtant he commanded the Princeſs to be tied by her hair to a wild horſe, who, in full ſpeed, dragged her till ſhe was torn in pieces. Thus was Alſawad revenged of his undutiful and perfidious daughter, by means of the Perſian monarch his greateſt enemy; and ſo true it is, that there is no reckoning upon the fidelity of a perſon one has not found to be proof againſt temptation.

Artaxerxes having taken the fort in the manner related, conquered all the country bordering upon Meſopotamia, and carried his arms even into Cappadocia. Theſe rapid victories alarmed Rome. Alexander, by the advice of his council, wrote to the barbarian Prince, that the Romans were not people that were to be eaſily overcome, which the orientals had found to their coſt under Auguſtus, Trajan, and many other Emperors, for which reaſon he did not act over-wiſely to expoſe himſelf to the ſame misfortunes: but this letter had a quite contrary effect from what was expected; for the Perſian, inſtead of being intimidated by theſe threats, purſued his conqueſts, on purpoſe to let the Romans ſee he was not afraid of them.

The Emperor being informed of this, prepared for war; and every thing being ready, he ſet out from Rome, accompanied by the ſenate and an infinite number of people, who teſtified by their tears, the affliction they were in at the departure

of

of a Prince, who, by his mildneſs, beneficence, and many other rare and valuable qualities, had ſo well deſerved their eſteem.

As ſoon as the army was arrived at Antioch, the Emperor ſent a ſecond embaſſy to Artaxerxes, but to as little purpoſe as the former. Alexander being then convinced that it was in vain to parly any longer, marched directly towards this haughty enemy, and gained a glorious victory. This news had no ſooner reached Rome, than the whole town was in the greateſt joy imaginable, but it is not poſſible to expreſs their ſatisfaction at his arrival there. He was received in triumph, and all the orders of the town went out to meet him with as much zeal and eagerneſs as if each particular perſon was to meet his father after a long abſence. Rome, they ſaid, was now ſafe, ſince ſhe poſſeſſed within her walls ſo ineſtimable a jewel as Alexander.

The Emperor was extremely ſenſible of the ſincere tokens of affection ſhewn him by the Romans, and diſtributed great ſums of money among the troops and the people. To his extraordinary bounty and generoſity, he added all ſorts of ſports, games and ſhows; but the revolt of the Gauls ſoon interrupted the diverſions.

Alexander was mightily provoked that theſe barbarians, who, under the weakeſt and leaſt warlike Emperors had not dared to ſtir, ſhould have the aſſurance to ſhake off the yoke of obedience in his reign, who had juſt ſubdued the Perſians, a people that were looked upon as infinitely more formidable. He reſolved therefore to make an example of them, and for that purpoſe ſet out again from Rome, with Mamea, at the head of a powerful army, leaving the people in great grief. It is ſaid that a Druid met him on the

the road, and told him his expedition would not be attended with ſucceſs, for that his ſoldiers would betray him. It is alſo reported, that an aſtrologer foretold that he would be killed. Theſe unfortunate predictions did not hinder the Emperor from marching, with the utmoſt diligence, to Mentz. Among his legions, there was one compoſed of Pannonians, and commanded by Maximinus, who has been already ſpoke of. This officer had the greateſt obligations to the Emperor, who brought him up, and had given him innumerable marks of his eſteem; all this kindneſs, however, made no impreſſion upon that ungrateful wretch, who had formed a deſign to put the Emperor to death, and took all opportunities to render him odious to the ſoldiers; often inſinuating, that it was a ſhame for troops, accuſtomed to conquer, to obey a Prince that was entirely governed by a woman, and who had not reſolution to fight the enemies to the Empire. That inſtead of going directly againſt the barbarians, Mamea had prevailed on him to return into the Eaſt with her ſon, and was not aſhamed to leave the army without a chief, fleeing, in a manner, before the enemy.

Theſe ſeditious diſcourſes had but too great an effect upon the minds of the ſoldiers, who are generally fond of change, and who, beſides, were not over content with Mamea, from whom they never received the leaſt liberality or preſent, though ſhe was immenſely rich. They imagined that a new Emperor would be more generous, and that by maſſacring Alexander, they would be entiled to great rewards from whomever they ſhould chuſe in his ſtead. Thus animated by the perfidious perſuaſions of Maximinus, and by the hopes of a conſiderable recompence, they reſolved to get rid of Mamea and her ſon. The

treacherous

treacherous Maximinus took advantage of the diſpoſition the ſoldiers were in, and ſeeing them determined to act conformable to his wiſhes, detached a band of theſe Pannonians to Mentz where the Emperor was. The unexpected arrival of theſe tumultuous troops without being ſent for, cauſed immediately a great conſternation. The Emperor's guards, either intimidated or corrupted, fled away, and left their Emperor expoſed to the fury of this mutinous cohort. Mamea came out to perſuade the rebels to return to their duty, but ſhe had no ſooner appeared, than the ſoldiers brutally murdered her, and cut to pieces as many as attempted to defend her.

Alexander, who was in his tent, being informed of this uproar, gave himſelf up for loſt. He had indeed obſerved very ſtrictly the military diſcipline, but yet was the fartheſt in the world from cruelty. He was nevertheleſs always apprehenſive that ſooner or later, he ſhould experience the bad conſequences of his mother's avarice. In effect, as ſoon as he perceived the aſſaſſins enter his tent, (their ſwords beſmeared with his mother's blood) he cried out, that Mamea's covetouſneſs had undone him. He promiſed to diſtribute among them all the money he had, but nothing could prevail, for they diſpatched him in a moment; and never was Prince more undeſerving of ſuch a fate.

It is not known what became of the Empreſs Memmia. A modern hiſtorian * aſſerts, that ſhe had a ſon by Alexander who died young; but this does not ſeem to be ſufficiently proved; nor is there any mention made of another wife of Alexander, to whom the medals give the name of Saluſtia Barbia Orbiana. It is not, however, doubted

* Occo. Num.

doubted but Alexander had three wives. Triſtan confounds Memmia with the daughter of Marcianus, as if it was the ſame perſon; but Lamprides diſtinguiſhes them too clearly to give room for any ſuch conjecture.

PAU-

PAULINA, *Wife of* MAXIMINUS, ORESTILLA, *Wife of* GORDIAN, *Senior*, CRISPILLA, *Wife of* PUPIAN, TRANQUILLINA, *Wife of* GORDIAN III.

WE differ in opinion from Cameratius, who, in his notes upon the chronology of Nicephorus, aſſerts that Calpurnia, of the celebrated family of the Piſons, was wife to Maximinus, and that ſhe was a lady of exquiſite beauty and virtue. He was led into that miſtake by miſunderſtanding a paſſage in Trebellius; for it is plain, that the above-mentioned hiſtorian * affirms that Calpurnia was wife to Titus Quatrinus, who revolted againſt Maximinus, as we ſhall ſee by the ſequel.

The name of Maximinus's wife was, for a long time, unknown, but it is now the general opinion of learned men, that this Empreſs was called Paulina. This Princeſs had beauty and virtue, was of a very beneficient diſpoſition, and inclined to mildneſs and clemency. She was a great enemy to injuſtice, and has been much commended for her endeavours to moderate the violence and impetuoſity of her huſband's temper. Maximinus † was born in a ſmall village in Thrace. His father was a Goth, and his mother a Scythian; ſo that, in his perſon, were united the two wildeſt and moſt barbarous nations of the earth. He had been a ſhepherd in his youth. He was of a gigantic ſize, and incredible things are told of his ſtrength, which was the beginning of his fortune; for, during the rejoicings that were made at court for the birth of Prince Geta, he gave proofs of ſuch prodigious force before the Emperor

* Trebel. Trig. Tryan. † Ammian. Marcel.

ror Severus, that he imagined ſuch a man would be capable of doing good ſervice in the army, and gave him a company in the guards, from whence he roſe by degrees to the greateſt employments. As to his temper, manners and extraction, all was barbarous. He was brutal, cruel, covetous, and perfidious; and had all the vices of tyrants.

He ſerved under Severus and Caracalla with great fidelity, but quitted the ſervice when Macrinus ſeized the empire. He remained unemployed till Heliogabalus dethroned Macrinus, and then offered his ſervice to the new Emperor, but did not meet with ſuch encouragement as he hoped for, nor any of thoſe marks of eſteem that Caracalla and Severus had ſhewn him. On the contrary, he conceived a very bad opinion of him, from the behaviour of that vicious and depraved Emperor, who, on account of that extraordinary vigour and ſtrength of Maximinus, ſo much talked of, aſked him ſeveral very impertinent queſtions; ſo he ſeldom appeared at court during his reign; but when Alexander came to the throne, he got himſelf introduced to him.

Alexander, being well acquainted with his merit, gave him a very favourable reception, preſented him to the ſenate, of which he made him a member, gave him the command of a legion, and afterwards of an army: Thus exalting a perſon who was to be the author of his ruin. Theſe exceſſive honours increaſed his ambition, pride, and inſolence to a great degree; he put ſuch a confidence in his ſtrength, that he imagined himſelf invincible, and able to undertake what he pleaſed. But what eſpecially contributed to his pride and haughtineſs, was the great value and eſteem the Emperor and his mother Mamea had for him; the latter carried it ſo far as to have thoughts of marrying her daughter Theoclia to

his

his ſon, and which would actually have been accompliſhed, if, as we have obſerved, Alexander had not, with a good deal of difficulty, diverted his mother from her deſign. This was probably the cauſe of that ſecret ſpleen and reſentment that Maximinus (ever after) conceived againſt Alexander.

Young Maximinus was, without diſpute, one of the handſomeſt men in the world. Every thing about him was amiable *; for which reaſon all the ladies in Rome, of that ſort that are not very ſcrupulous, were deſirous to have him for a lover. He was magnificent in his apparel, and neglected nothing that could poſſibly ſet off his perſon. He was a great lover of gaity and pleaſures, was no enemy to gallantry, and in a word had every thing that could recommend him to the fair ſex, and many there were that ſighed for him. It may be taken for granted that the ladies did not admire him the leſs for his being inveſted with the ſovereign authority, for his father had aſſociated him with himſelf in the Empire, that the ſenate and Roman people might be forced to own (as he ſaid) that there never was ſo beautiful a Prince upon the throne. Julia Fadilla was of the number of his admirers, and as ſhe was the moſt illuſtrious of them, ſhe bid the faireſt to be miſtreſs of the young Emperor's heart.

She was grand-daughter to Antoninus, † and together with the nobility of her birth, nature had given her that dazzling beauty that all the Princeſſes of her family were endued with. Maximinus the father, who was willing to deface the obſcurity of his own family by a grand alliance, looked upon Fadilla as perſon capable of doing honour

* Capitolin. in Maxim. † Capitolin.

honour to his ſon; and whether the Prince's inclinations were conformable to thoſe of his father and the lady, or whether he was deſirous to be nearly related to Antoninus, whoſe name and memory were ſo much eſteemed at Rome, Fadilla was pitched upon to be his partner on the throne. They were ſolemnly betrothed at Rome, and the Prince made the lady the uſual preſents upon that occaſion, which hiſtory tells us were magnificent, and that they conſiſted chiefly in necklaces, bracelets and ſumptuous robes. The troubles that came on ſoon after, obliged him however to quit his miſtreſs, and put off his wedding till his return. But he never had that ſatisfaction, being involved in the misfortunes his father drew upon himſelf by his cruelty and avarice, which filled the Empire with blood and executions. He put all thoſe to death who had been the domeſticks, friends or counſellors of Alexander, as well as thoſe who were particularly acquainted with the lowneſs and obſcurity of his family; and, moſt ungratefully deſtroyed people that had been of great ſervice to him at the beginning of his fortune.

He could not endure perſons of high quality *, becauſe their nobility ſeemed to reproach him with his own contemptible original. People of good characters were odious to him, becauſe the compariſon between their virtues and his vices, made him appear in a worſe light than he would otherwiſe have done. As for thoſe that were rich, they were the objects of his moſt bitter perſecution, becauſe their death enriched him with their ſpoils; ſo that, during the reign of this tyrant, nothing was ſo dangerous as the reputation of being virtuous or wealthy.

Paulina

* Aurel. Victor. Epit. Capitolin. in Maxim.

Paulina was ſecretly in the greateſt affliction * at theſe cruelties; for as ſhe was born with quite different diſpoſitions, ſhe bewailed thoſe evils to which ſhe could afford no other remedy than her compaſſion. She did not doubt but her huſband's conduct would bring upon him ſome terrible misfortune, and that the people and grandees of the empire, being drove to deſpair by ſo many vexations, would do their endeavours to ſhake off a yoke that was become intolerable. She therefore did all that lay in her power to make him alter his behaviour, and to inſpire him with more humane ſentiments. Her entreaties and remonſtrances put a ſtop ſometimes to his fury, but ſoon after the tyrant would return to his own natural temper; his barbarity always got the better of her arguments, ſo that he ſtained all the provinces with the blood of the moſt illuſtrious perſons, whom he ſacrificed to his rage. After having robbed particular people, he pillaged the cities, and ſeized all their treaſures and revenues, not ſparing even the temples, which he plundered and ſtripped of their ornaments.

Theſe exceſſes ſtirred up many powerful people to revolt, and provoked the Oſrhœnians, who were the ſoldiers that had been moſt faithful to Alexander, and who extremely regretted his death. They were a troop that had been commanded by Titus Quatrinus, but who had been deprived of that employment by Maximinus, becauſe Alexander had had an extraordinary kindneſs for him. The diſgrace of their general irritating them more and more againſt Maximinus, they therefore proclaimed Quatrinus Emperor, cloathed him with the imperial robes, and paid him royal honours. No body was † more capable of maintaining this

 dignity,

* Ammian. Marcel. lib. 14. † Herodian. lib. Trebel. Pollio. 30. Tir.

dignity, for he was nobly deſcended, and had acquired a very great reputation. But, whether it was that he could not reconcile to himſelf ſuch a breach of his duty, or that he was apprehenſive of the ſucceſs of it, he refuſed the empire; till being compelled by the troops that had ſerved under him in Syria, he was reſolved to try his fortune. What moſt of all prevailed upon him to do ſo, was the perfidious perſuaſion of his ancient friend Macedon, who was the principal author of the conſpiracy, and who was hatching the blackeſt treaſon that could enter into the heart of man. For one day when the unfortunate Quatrinus was ſleeping with great tranquillity in his tent, the infamous Macedon aſſaſſinated him, and had the brutality to cut off his head and carry it to Maximinus, in hopes to be rewarded for an action that deſerved the moſt rigorous puniſhment. He did not, however, receive for his baſeneſs the recompence he expected. The Emperor was, indeed, very well pleaſed with the thing, as he was glad to get rid of a formidable enemy, but whatever benefit people receive from the treaſon, the traitor is ſure to be deteſted; Macedon was put to death by order of Maximinus, who was informed that he himſelf was the author of the conſpiracy, and the perſon that prevailed on Quatrinus to undertake it. It is ſaid that Calpurnia, Quatrinus's wife, acquainted the Emperor with this, and that her huſband had engaged in the plot contrary to her advice. Hiſtory gives her an extraordinary character: She was of the celebrated family of the Piſo's, ſo remarkable in Rome for its antiquity and the many eminent men it had furniſhed the republick with. Her illuſtrious birth was not however ſo great an honour to her as her virtues, eſpecially the regard ſhe paid to the memory of her huſband, to which ſhe dedicated the remainder of her life, and paſſed

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the reſt of her days in widowhood, with ſo much modeſty and reſervedneſs, that the regularity of her conduct was looked upon * as a rare example of prudence and diſcretion, ſo that ſtatues were erected to her honour.

This valuable lady had a ſilver baſon of one hundred pounds weight, upon which were engraven the famous exploits of her anceſtors.

The miſcarriage of the ſeveral conſpiracies that were formed againſt Maximinus, made him of courſe more proud and cruel. He gave full ſcope to the ferocity of his nature, ſo that rivers of blood ran all over the provinces. He ſo much encouraged informers and ſlanderers, that nothing was heard of but complaints and accuſations. The high roads were filled with unfortunate wretches, that were dragged into Germany, where the Emperor then was, and who had been falſely accuſed of crimes, for which they were ſure to ſuffer death if they had any poſſeſſions, for their effects were always confiſcated to the Emperor. No excuſes or juſtifications were attended to; they were condemned without proof and puniſhed without reaſon. Never did Rome groan under a more cruel ſcourge. Maximinus, incapable of remorſe or compaſſion, thought only of gratifying his inſatiable avarice, without fearing the dreadful conſequences of his tyrannical behaviour, having taken it in his head that there was no body ſo bold as not to tremble at the force of his arm, and not conſidering that lions, tygers, and elephants are ſubdued in ſpite of their great ſtrength; as a buffoon told him one day in the amphitheatre, and which would infallibly have coſt him his life, if the Emperor had underſtood Latin well enough to have comprehended the meaning of it, for he

* Trebel. Pollio. 30. Tiran.

was not a man to permit any body to give him advice. The words of the buffoon were these:

Et qui ab uno non poteſt occidi
A multis occiditur.
Elephas grandis eſt, et occiditur:
Leo fortis eſt, et occiditur:
Tigris fortis eſt, et occiditur:
Cave multos, ſi ſingulos non times.

The Empreſs Paulina ſadly experienced the brutality of his nature, for as ſhe laid hold of every opportunity to inſpire him, if poſſible, with ſome ſentiments of humanity, ſhe repreſented to him the danger to which he expoſed himſelf; he was ſo provoked at her importunate leſſons that he reſolved to diſpatch her out of the way, and accordingly poiſoned her. This Princeſs was of ſo beneficent a diſpoſition * that ſhe was extremely regretted. The ſenate did not fail to grant her the honour of immortality, for, tho' ſhe had but little influence over her barbarous huſband, ſhe had contrived the means of ſparing a great deal of blood.

The death of Paulina made Fadilla very impatient for the return of the young Prince, to whom ſhe was betrothed; nor could ſhe ſee without great vexation, her hopes retarded by the abſence of him who was to raiſe her to the Empire, but her uneaſineſs would have been much greater if ſhe had known that his abſence was voluntary, and that it proceeded from his indifference. For, whatever arguments the Emperor made uſe of to perſuade his ſon to go to Rome, where he ſaid his preſence was neceſſary to keep the people in awe, he would not † quit his father; ſo that his paſſion for the Princeſs was not ſo violent as he pretended to

* Zonar. Triſt. Com. Hiſt.

† Capitolin. in Maxim.

to her. But though he could not prevail upon himſelf to leave Germany from motives of love, he ought to have done it at leaſt on account of his intereſt; and had ſoon reaſon to be convinced that the Emperor was in the right when he preſſed him ſo much to go to Rome, where he might have hindered what happened there ſoon after, and which coſt him his life and the empire. The revolt began in Africa; that Province was wearied out with the oppreſſions of the commiſſary that Maximinus had ſent thither, and who exerciſed his authority as thoſe of his profeſſion are uſed to do, that is to ſay, with the utmoſt ſeverity. They were determined therefore to ſhake off this tyrannical yoke, which was no longer ſupportable, and chuſe themſelves another maſter.

Gordian, Proconſul of Aſia, ſeemed a fit perſon to fill the throne. He was a venerable old man, grown grey in the ſervice, and in the exerciſe of the greateſt employments, in which he had acquitted himſelf with honour. He was ſon of Metius Marcellus, of the celebrated family of the Gracchi, and of Ulpia Gordiana, deſcended from Trajan; but if * he was illuſtrious by his birth, he was not leſs ſo on account of his great actions. He had been twice Conſul, and that dignity was, in a manner, hereditary in his family; he had afterwards the government of Africa, where he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his conduct, his magnificence, and the noble uſe he made of his riches. He married Fabia Oreſtilla, daughter of Annius Verus, who, in all probability, died before Gordian came to the Empire. She was niece to Antoninus, and conſequently related to Fadilla. They had a daughter and a ſon; Metia the former was married to Junius Balbus, (who had been Conſul)

* Capitolin. in Gordianos tres.

and Marcus Antoninus-Gordian, who was declared auguſt along with his father, and under whom he ſerved as Lieutenant-General in Africa. Gordian, the father, was then very old, being near 80 years of age, but yet was reckoned a man fit for ſervice, and capable of diſputing the Empire with Maximinus. The people, then, who conducted this affair, went to Gordian in the night, ſurrounded his bed, and with their drawn ſwords in their hands, told him they came to force the empire upon him.

Gordian was alarmed at this propoſal, and thought they were laying a ſnare for him. He pleaded his age, and put them in mind of the fidelity they owed the Emperor, the danger to which they expoſed themſelves, and ſaid every thing he could think of to make them deſiſt from their deſign, but his remonſtrances only ſerved to increaſe their obſtinacy; they aſſured him, that whatever danger the undertaking might be attended with, they were ready to ſhare it with him; and, ſeeing that he ſtill refuſed to accept the Empire, they told him, that he muſt either conſent, or prepare for death. This alternative determined him to comply with their requeſt; he choſe rather to run the riſk of a diſtant evil, than meet with certain and immediate deſtruction. He ſuffered himſelf, therefore, to be inveſted with the purple robe, and after having aſſociated his ſon with him in the Throne, he ſet out for Carthage with all the pomp and ſplendor of an Emperor upon his march. The ſenate confirmed what was done in Africa; for, as the members were either relations or friends to Gordian, and mortally hated Maximinus, who exerciſed his cruelties as much at Rome as in the Provinces, they declared the Gordians, auguſt, and the other, enemy to the republic.

Maxi-

Maximinus was informed of all this in Germany, and the news diſconcerted him ſo much, that he tore his robes, threw himſelf upon the ground, and drew his ſword, as if it had been in his power to kill all the ſenators. He alſo made an attempt to kill his ſon, becauſe he imagined, that if he had followed his advice, and had gone to Rome, his preſence would have intimidated the ſenators. As ſoon as he began to cool a little, and to recover the uſe of his reaſon, he aſſembled his troops, and took the road to Rome, fully reſolved to exterminate the ſenate, who had ſet a price upon his head in the decree that was iſſued againſt him, and of which he had found means to procure a copy. He had all the reaſon in the world to expect good ſucceſs, when he heard that the two Gordians were put to death; for Capellian, who commanded the troops in Mauritania, and who was attached to the intereſts of Maximinus, being told of the election of Gordian, whom he hated, marched to attack him. Gordian, the ſon, went out of Carthage to meet him. This young prince having but little experience, was entirely defeated, and loſt his life. The old man was ſo ſtruck with grief at the loſs of his ſon and collegue, added to the apprehenſion he had of falling into the hands of his enemy, that he ſtrangled himſelf with his girdle.

The death of theſe two Emperors threw Rome into the utmoſt conſternation. The ſenate, after the ſtep they had taken, thought they had no meaſures to keep; they deliberated about chuſing ſome other perſon proper to oppoſe Maximinus, and at laſt pitched upon Balbinus and Pupian, two ſenators that were remarkable for their merit and experience, as well in military, as civil, affairs.

Pupian had married Quintia Criſpilla, a lady of great reſolution *. Hiſtory does not mention her family; and her huſband's reign was ſo ſhort, that ſhe was ſcarce known; but one of her actions, repreſented in a medal, gives us a great idea of her courage. It does not appear that ſhe ever received the Title of auguſt no more than her huſband; ſo it is probable, that the election of theſe two Emperors was ſo precipitate, that the Senate had not time to confer upon them the honours that had always been given to thoſe that were inveſted with the ſovereign authority.

The excellent qualities of Balbinus and Pupian, juſtified the choice of the ſenate, but did not pleaſe the people, who inſiſted upon their electing one of Gordian's family, and threatned to maſſacre thoſe whom the ſenate had proclaimed, if that ſatisfaction was refuſed them. Though the ſenators ſaw their authority attacked by this ſedition, they were ſo unwilling to fill the town with trouble and confuſion, that they carried young Gordian, about twelve years of age, into the Capitol, declared him Cæſar, put on him the Imperial robes, and by adding this third Auguſt, added to the other two, contented the people. Some hiſtorians inform us, that he was ſon to Gordian the ſecond, but the opinion of thoſe who aſſert that he was ſon of Mætia Fauſtina, daughter to old Gordian, and of Junius Balbus, has been more generally received.

After this Election, the new Emperors prepared for war. Balbinus remained at Rome to take care of the domeſtick affairs, and Pupian went to Ravenna to meet Maximinus, who had already entered Italy, and who, having heard what had been done at Rome, flattered himſelf with no leſs than the pleaſure of ſacrificing the whole ſenate to his reſent-

* Meneſtrier.

reſentment, but his cruelty drew on him his deſtruction; for, coming before Aquilea, which had ſhut her gates againſt him, and not being able to gain admittance, either by threats, promiſes, or artifices, he reſolved to ſtorm the town, and to put all the ſoldiers and inhabitants to the ſword.

This bloody deſign exaſperated the garriſon beyond meaſure, and put them upon reſolving to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity. The town's people imitated their zeal, and ſhewed a courage and reſolution, nothing inferior to that of the ſoldiers; and the very women were ready to hazard their lives to ſave the place. Maximinus, then, met with ſuch a reſiſtance as made him mad with rage. He renewed the attack ſeveral times, but was always beaten back with great loſs. It was upon this occaſion that the women of Aquilea gave an inſtance of their courage that has been ſo much talked of and commended; for the cords belonging to the machines being worn out, they all cut off their hair to ſupply the defect. There is great reaſon to believe that the Empreſs Criſpilla, wife to Pupian, who probably accompanied her huſband thither, gave an example to the reſt in this affair. The ſenate to perpetuate the generoſity of theſe heroines, built a temple, which they dedicated to Venus, and cauſed a medal to be ſtruck in honour of Quintia Criſpilla, who is there repreſented as a womon with her hair cut cloſe off.

Maximinus, not being able to take the town, diſcharged his fury upon the officers and ſoldiers of his army, whom he loaded with reproaches that were as impolitick as they were unjuſt, and which did not fail to provoke them in the higheſt degree: Seeing themſelves, therefore, ſo ill rewarded for all their pains, they reſolved to get rid

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of the inconveniencies of this tedious and troubleſome ſiege, and at the ſame time ſecure themſelves againſt the ill treatment of Maximinus, who was hated and forſaken by all the world. They entered into his tent when he was aſleep, and maſſacred both him and his ſon.

Pupian was ſo pleaſed to ſee himſelf delivered from this formidable enemy, that he immediately diſpatched an expreſs to Balbinus, with a letter, accompanied with the uſual ceremonies*. Never was news received with ſo much pleaſure, which was teſtified by all ſorts of rejoicings, and by the Hecatomb which the Emperor Balbinus offered in gratitude to the Gods. Pupian arrived ſoon after at Rome, and was welcomed by the acclamations of the ſenate and people, eſpecially the former, who, by honouring the Emperor Pupian, intended to vindicate and applaud their having elected him; and ſome of them, in the tranſports of their joy, happened to draw a compariſon between Emperors choſen by the ſenate, and ſuch as had been made by the ſtupid and ignorant ſoldiers (as they called them). This proved fatal to the two Princes; for the Prætorians, not being able to endure Emperors that were elected contrary to their inclinations, brutally aſſaſſinated them in the palace.

This tragical affair filled Rome with mourning. Every body was in the greateſt affliction, except Fadilla, who looked upon theſe two Princes as perſons who had cauſed the deſtruction of the Maximins. But a new admirer ſoon baniſhed from her heart the image of young Maximinus. Toxotius

* When the meſſengers carried good news, the pacquet that contained the letters, as well as the head of their ſpears, was adorned with laurel, but when bad, with black feathers.

tius was a Senator of a noble family †, remarkable in Rome for his politeneſs and many good qualities, eſpecially for the works that he had compoſed in verſe, and which were well received by the publick. Fadilla found in him merit enough to make her forget that of young Maximinus. Toxotius, as well as herſelf, was deſcended from Antonius, and though he had not an Empire to offer her, he held a very conſiderable rank in Rome. This marriage was accompliſhed then, and Fadilla had the ſatisfaction of adorning herſelf with the ſuperb ornaments, and magnificent robes, that Maximinus had preſented her with when he was betrothed to her.

The maſſacre of the two Emperors would have been attended with bad conſequences, if the Prætorians, who murdered them*, had not given out, to appeaſe the people, that they did it with no other view than to ſecure the Empire to young Gordian, whom they at the ſame time preſented to them, having conducted him from the camp. At the ſight of the Prince, the misfortune of his collegues was forgot, and he was declared ſole Emperor; and the Senate, whoſe authority had been uſed to yield to that of the troops, were forced to confirm the Election. Gordian took poſſeſſion of his new dignity under unfortunate preſages; for that very day there was ſo total an eclipſe of the ſun, that people were obliged to light torches, in order to go about their affairs, and diſtinguiſh each other. This was reckoned a ſure prognoſtication of the ſhortneſs of his reign, and the event verified theſe conjectures, to the great regret of all the orders of the town, who loved this Prince exceſſively; and certainly he deſerved their affection. He was extraordinary handſome, of a ſweet

† Capitolin. in Maxim. junior.
* Herodian. lib. 8. Capitolin.

ſweet and amiable countenance, and moſt agreeable humour: He wanted nothing, in ſhort, but a little more age. His mother had, by I know not what falſe policy, or blind complaiſance, brought him up with eunuchs and freed-men, who had infuſed into him their corrupt ſentiments, and at whoſe inſtigation he had done ſome very bad things. But Gordian ſoon met with better advice and example in Miſitheus, whoſe daughter he married. This perſon was in high eſteem at Rome for the gravity of his manners and prudent conduct, ſo that he had very juſtly acquired the reputation of a great man. He had a daughter called Turia Sabina-Tranquillina, who had inherited her father's good qualities. In her were united the greateſt beauty, and ſtricteſt virtue*, which recommended her to the Emperor's good graces. He married her at Rome†, and the people, who were extremely fond of Gordian, celebrated his nuptials with all the rejoicings and magnificence that could be thought of. Gordian might have made a more honourable alliance, but not a more profitable one; for Miſitheus was poſſeſſed of ſuch eminent talents for important affairs, that things ſoon put on another appearance; he corrected many abuſes that had crept in ſince the death of Alexander Severus, and made ſo good a uſe of the authority that his employments furniſhed him with, that the Senate decreed him the glorious Title of Tutor to the Republick.

Tranquillina, on her part, by the regularity of her behaviour and excellent endowments, proved herſelf worthy of the high rank to which Gordian had exalted her. Her life was innocent, and exempt from all ſuſpicion of vice, free from pride and haughtineſs, and ſhe made no other uſe of her

* Triſtan. comment. Hiſtor. † Eutrop.

her power than to embrace, and even ſeek after, opportunities of doing good. The ladies of Rome had ſuch an affection for her, that they erected a ſtatue to her honour, with an inſcription that ſhewed how much ſhe was valued and beloved. The Senate made her auguſt; and the Provinces ſtrove with each other which ſhould excel in the glorious monuments they gave, of the perfect eſteem they had for this illuſtrious Empreſs.

She had ſcarce began to taſte the firſt ſweets of her happy condition, when the revolt of the Perſians interrupted her felicity, by depriving her of the company of her huſband. This filled her with terrors and anxieties; for Sapor, king of Perſia, made dreadful havock where-ever he came, ſo that the Empreſs was very ſenſible he was no enemy to be deſpiſed. Artaxerxes, his father, when he left him the kingdom, had alſo bequeathed him his bloody and tyrannical diſpoſition. He was of a gigantick ſtature, of a furious and implacable temper, and one of the leaſt torments that he inflicted upon thoſe he had a mind to puniſh, was to flea them alive. Gordian being informed of Sapor's acts of hoſtility, opened the Temple of Janus, declared war againſt the Perſian with the uſual ceremonies; and after having made the neceſſary preparations, marched againſt the barbarians under the conduct of his father-in-law. His expedition was attended with ſucceſs; for he ſoon retook the ſtrong towns that Sapor had made himſelf maſter of, and put the tyrant to flight, purſuing him into his own territories. But the death of Miſitheus was the concluſion of his proſperity. Whether the fatigues of the war had impaired the health of this incomparable man, or whether it was that his time was come, he found himſelf taken very ill of a flux. This unlucky accident greatly alarmed the Em-

peror. He ſent for the moſt ſkilful phyſicians, who ordered ſuch remedies as they thought proper, and which probably would have been effectual, if a perfidious wretch had not found means to baffle them. Among the officers of the army, there was an Arabian named Philip, who, beſides that he did not love Miſitheus, was thirſting after his employment of Colonel of the Prætorians. He was a man of very obſcure family, but had not the leſs ambition upon that account, and was capable of the greateſt crimes to compaſs his ends. Miſitheus's ſickneſs offered him a fair opportunity of advancing his fortune; and, as he was not in the leaſt miſtruſted, they were not upon their guard againſt his attempts; ſo that Miſitheus fell a victim to them; for Philip having found means to convey poiſon into the medicines, the General died. Gordian was left in a deplorable ſituation, and as he knew nothing of Philip's being the cauſe of his father-in-law's death, and having no officer ſo proper to fill up the vacancy as he, he gave this treacherous Arabian the place, who abuſing the Emperor's goodneſs, and the confidence he put in him, made uſe of his authority to bring about the ruin of his benefactor. In effect, as ambition ſeldom knows any bounds; he had no ſooner attained to what he was ſo greedy of, but he wanted to be Emperor, and laboured to deſtroy the perſon who had raiſed him. Sometimes he vented himſelf in ſeditious diſcourſes againſt Gordian, whom he treated as a child, incapable of governing the empire, and conducting the armies; at other times, he maliciouſly contrived ſubjects and occaſions for a revolt, by letting the ſoldiers want proviſions, and then throwing the blame upon the Emperor. In ſhort, he practiſed ſo many ſtratagems, that he got Gordian to make him his partner in the Empire. His pride was not yet glutted;

glutted; for, not content with ſharing the throne with Gordian, he thought it below him to have the Emperor for his collegue, and, by a horrible ingratitude, maſſacred him on the borders of Perſia. Thus periſhed miſerably this young Prince, whoſe virtues had made him ſo dear to the Romans. The ſoldiers, that Philip was not able to corrupt, regretted extremely their Emperor, and erected a magnificent tomb in honour of him, which ſhewed his merit, and the deteſtable character of his murderer. Of all thoſe that were concerned in this aſſaſſination, not one of them died a natural death. It is even credibly reported, that they either killed themſelves, or were killed with the ſame ſwords they made uſe of when they put their Emperor to death.

MARCIA

MARCIA OTACILIA SEVERA, *Wife of* PHILIP.

HITHERTO all the Empreſſes were heathens, but in Otacilia we find a chriſtian Princeſs. She is one of thoſe of whom leaſt mention is made in hiſtory; nor is it certainly known whether ſhe was an Arabian, as well as her huſband, or a Roman lady, as ſeems probable by her name. Her medals give her a ſerious countenance, a modeſt air, and a tolerable ſhare of beauty. She had the good fortune to be inſtructed in the Chriſtian religion *, but had not ſo much imbibed its maxims as to be exempt from ambition, or to be hindred from going into the crimes, and unjuſt projects of her huſband.

Otacilia married Julius Philippus, an Arabian, and of a very obſcure family. His father was chief of a band of robbers, but he, † thinking his father's trade a very dangerous one, imagined he could do better for himſelf by turning ſoldier. He was handſome in his perſon, had a maſculine and warlike air, ‡ but rude and unpoliſhed to the laſt degree; and, tho' he diſliked his father's profeſſion, he had all the inclinations and vices of it. He was audacious, inſolent, perfidious, ungrateful, having no ſenſe of favours received, nor kindneſs for his benefactors. He was ambitious beyond meaſure, and ſo forgetful of the meanneſs of his birth, that the higher he was raiſed the leſs he was ſatisfied. The dignities, that might be imagined ſufficient to content the proudeſt of mortals, only ſerved to make him deſirous of more. He was beſides, very light and fickle, void of reflection,

* Chron. Alex. Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. 6. † Aurel. Victor. ‡ Triſtan. Comment.

tion, tho' capable of reaſoning with great ſolidity. His behaviour was ſo odd, even after he became Emperor, that he would frequently ſet up a loud laugh upon occaſions where ſerioufneſs and gravity were moſt required, which ſhewed the levity of his mind. He performed his duty ſo well when a common ſoldier, that he was thought deſerving of the greateſt military employments. It is however certain, that he had more reputation than merit; for he often wanted reſolution and courage where it was neceſſary, and in effect, loſt the Empire by that means. It is generally taken for granted that he was a chriſtian (however unworthy he was of that glorious appellation) * nor can we make any queſtion of it after all the proofs of it that the moſt learned hiſtorians, as well ancient as modern, furniſh us with; and we ſhall ſee that he illuſtrated the beginning of his reign by an inſtance of great chriſtian humility.

It is not well known what ſort of life Otacilia led before her huſband came to the empire, but in all probability ſhe conducted herſelf prudently and without reproach. She had a daughter whoſe name we are not acquainted with; who was married to Severian, an officer not much known at that time, but afterwards became general of the army in Macedonia, an employment he was by no means fit for.

Philip was already arrived to a great pitch of power and authority when Maximinus and the Gordians diſputed the Empire; and it was during theſe troubles that his wife Otacilia was brought to bed of a ſon who was called after his father. Oticilia took the greateſt care of his education; ſhe inſtructed him in her own religion, and inſpired

* Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. 6. Oros. lib. 7. Nicephor. lib. 5. Tillemont not. ſup. Philip.

ſpired him with ſentiments conformable to it, * to which may be attributed that modeſty and reſervedneſs which he was always remarkable for, notwithſtanding the impetuoſity to which youth is ſubject; except we rather chuſe to lay it upon the natural gloomineſs of his temper. However it be, he was during his whole life, of ſuch a melancholy diſpoſition, that he was never known to laugh upon any occaſion whatſoever.

If Otacilia infuſed into her ſon the maxims of chriſtianity, ſhe did not follow them very ſtrictly herſelf; for ſhe was ever ready to ſecond the ambitious views of her huſband, and had her ſhare in all the crimes upon which he built his fortune, even the murder by which he obtained the throne.

As ſoon as Philip had acquired conſiderable and important employments, he conceived ſtrong hopes of ſomething higher; for the obſcurity of his birth did not ſerve as a counterballance to his pride. It was certainly carrying his expectations very high †, but nothing hindered him from hoping, however wild and extravagant his pretenſions were. People, as low and obſcure as he, had been Emperors and the throne was actually filled by a young Prince whoſe only ſupport was the wiſdom and experience of his father-in-law; a poor ſupport, conſidering how the Prætorians took upon them to diſpoſe of the Empire, according to their own whims and fancies.

Philip's profeſſing a religion that prohibits all crimes and injuſtice, did not hinder him from purſuing ſuch meaſures as he thought would promote his temporal intereſts. His ardent deſire of ſovereign power got ſo much the better of his conſcience, that he was hardened againſt all ſcruples and

* Oroſ. lib. 7. Baron. ad an. 249. † Capitolin. in Gord. 3.

and remorſes; and as he only conſulted his ambition, he was reſolved to open himſelf a door to the empire by treaſons and murders.

He put Gordian therefore to death on the confines of Perſia, and there was no ſort of artifice that he did not make uſe of to conceal this horrid act. He wrote to the ſenate that the Emperor, having died of ſickneſs, the legions had choſen him. He ſpoke of Gordian with the greateſt reſpect, ranked him among the Gods, and procured him a place in heaven to make him amends for what he had deprived him of on earth. The ſenate, who had neither authority nor courage enough to contradict the army, confirmed the election, declared him auguſt, and decreed the ſame title to Otacilia. His firſt care was to make peace with the Perſians, and he was ſo much in haſte to get to Rome, that he even conſented to terms that were far from being honourable; ſo having put an end to the war, he ſet out directly with the Empreſs.

Whatever precautions they had taken to keep the people in ignorance of the crime they were guilty of, they were, nevertheleſs, ſuſpected. They arrived at Antioch towards the end of Lent, and as there were a great numbers of Chriſtians in that town, they were deſirous to give a proof of their religion, by going to church and joining in the ſervice that was performed on Eaſter eve. Babylas, the biſhop of Antioch (remarkable for his courage and ſanctity, and a moſt zealous aſſerter of the diſcipline of the church) being informed of what had paſſed in Perſia, and hearing that the Emperor and Empreſs were juſt at the door, went out to meet them; and was ſo far from being over-awed by the preſence of the maſter of the world, that he ſtopped the Emperor and hindred him from advancing,* repreſenting

*Chryſoſt. adv. gent. Nicephor. Cal. lib. 5. c. 25.

repreſenting to him, with a modeſt but generous liberty, that it was not proper he ſhould enter into that holy place with hands that were beſmeared with the blood of his Emperor and benefactor; that, after having committed ſo henious a crime, he could not aſſiſt at thoſe ſacred rites till he had expiated his guilt by performing a ſuitable penance. Nor was the Empreſs exempt from the penalty, for neither her ſex, dignity, nor the luſtre which ſurrounds the ſupreme authority, were thought by this holy prelate, ſufficient reaſon for eluding the rigour of the church.

Otacilia had virtue enough to ſacrifice her grandeur to her duty upon this occaſion. She ſubmitted, and ſhewed an edifying example of humility by undergoing, along with the other penitent women, whatever the biſhop of Antioch required of her. The Emperor alſo, doing the ſame, received abſolution.

This action made a great noiſe; it edified and rejoiced all thoſe who had the intereſt of religion at heart. Origen, who lived at that time, wrote the Empreſs a letter full of pious inſtructions becoming an apoſtle, * and Saint Hippolitus, who was then one of the greateſt biſhops in the church, addreſſed to her an exhortation worthy of his zeal.

After the Empreſs had given, at Antioch, ſo convincing a proof of her chriſtianity, ſhe accompanied her huſband to Rome, where ſhortly after their arrival, was celebrated with great rejoicings, the thouſandth year of its foundation. Philip entertained the people with the fighting of ſeveral kinds of wild beaſts, and upon this occaſion, made uſe of all thoſe that had been deſtined to Gordian's triumph. The Emperor did not, however, go to the Capitol to ſacrifice as uſual, which was

* Euſeb. lib. 6. Vincen. Lerin. lib. 1.

was attributed to his religion; but if he was a chriſtian, he was but a very imperfect one. He aſſiſted at all the ſhows in the amphitheatre, and that with ſo much good humour, that his ſon by no means approved of it; for Philip, burſting out into fits of laughter one day *, in the midſt of the diverſions, the young Prince, thinking this very indecent in an Emperor, turned away his head and frowned, to ſhew his diſlike at it.

Otacilia did not ſcruple to indulge herſelf in many things, that, without doubt, ſhe would never have done, if ſhe had been more zealous for the religion ſhe profeſſed. Flattery however was not wanting to celebrate her praiſes, as well as thoſe of many of her predeceſſors who were at leaſt as unworthy of them: We find there were medals ſtruck in honour of her with very pompous inſcriptions and encomiums.

Theſe rejoicings ended in an unfortunate accident, for Pompey's theatre took fire, and that ſuperb edifice was reduced to aſhes. This afflicted the Emperor extremly, but the account which he received ſoon after of the revolt of ſeveral of the provinces, was a more ſenſible and more intereſting ſubject of vexation.

The firſt year of his reign he gave his ſon the title of auguſt; and, the better to eſtabliſh himſelf in the throne, he gave his brother Priſcus the command of the troops in Syria, and made Severian, his ſon-in-law, general of the armies in Mæſia and Macedonia. Theſe Employments were above the merit and capacity of the two officers. Priſcus made ſo bad a uſe of his power, that the Syrians rebelled, and choſe for Emperor Jotapian, who gave out that he was nearly related to Alexander; and Severian behaved ſo ill in his command, that the troops in Mæſia revolted, and inveſted

* Aurel. Vict.

veſted, with the purple, Marinus, a perſon of very obſcure birth and ſmall experience. Theſe two rebellions alarmed the Emperor, but there were about him ſome very ſkilful generals, who encouraged him by affirming that Marinus was incapable of conducting ſo important an enterpriſe, and conſequently that this faction would come to nothing. In effect, it happened juſt ſo; for Marinus was maſſacred by the ſame perſons that had raiſed him, and received the puniſhment due to uſurpers.

But as Philip knew that Severian had not experience and conduct ſufficient to keep the troops and the province, which he had been intruſted with, in obedience, he reſolved to ſend Decius thither to chaſtiſe the authors of the revolt, that this example of ſeverity might intimidate ſuch as were inclined to ſedition.

Decius refuſed this employment at firſt, but was forced to yield to the poſitive command of Philip, who little imagined that he was advancing a perſon deſtined by Providence, to be the revenger of Gordian's death. Decius ſet out then much againſt his inclinations, and, before he arrived at the army, the motives of his journey were known. The rebels, being well acquainted with his character and knowing him to be inexorable, thought they had no better method of obtaining his favour than by declaring for him, and expiating their guilt by making him Emperor, who came to puniſh them with death. Decius, whether through fear or pretending great humility, refuſed the purple; but ſeeing that they threatned to kill him if he made any further reſiſtance, ſuffered himſelf to be proclaimed Emperor.

Philip was thunder-ſtruck when he had an account of this election. He knew full well the valour and capacity of this new uſurper, and was very

very ſenſible that the revolt which he conducted, was infinitely more dangerous than that which he was ſent to diſſipate. Decius indeed excuſed himſelf on account of his having been compelled to accept of the imperial dignity, and promiſed to quit it as ſoon as he ſhould arrive at Rome; but Philip looked upon this as meer artifice, and thought it was only a ſnare that his enemy was laying for him to lull him aſleep and ſurpriſe him; ſo marched directly to give him battle. The quarrel was ſoon decided; Philip was killed at Verona by the very ſoldiers who had encouraged his revolt againſt Gordian; ſo that he who drew the ſword to commit a horrid murder, periſhed in like manner by the ſword.

The Empreſs Otacilia was at Rome, waiting with the utmoſt impatience the event of this war. The reputation of Decius was ſufficient reaſon for her dreading the conſequence of it, nor were her apprehenſions without foundation. She was in the greateſt affliction when ſhe heard that Philip was dead, which ſhe looked upon as the melancholy fore-runner of her ſon's deſtruction; ſo that her grief, on account of the evils ſhe dreaded, were as great as thoſe which ſhe actually ſuffered. In effect, ſhe had all the reaſon in the world to fear that Decius would ſacrifice young Philip, to the fortune of his own children, and aſſure the empire to them at the expence of her ſon's life. Being therefore terrified with theſe reflections, and the approach of Decius, ſhe took refuge in the camp of the Prætorians, and put her ſon under their protection. But the camp was no place of ſafety for her, for the ſoldiers, hearing that Decius had defeated Philip and was proclaimed Emperor, maſſacred the young Prince in the arms of his mother, in order to entitle themſelves to the

favour of their new master. Otacilia was spared * because her life was of no consequence, for she was in no condition to cabal.

If this Empress was really a christian, the overturning of all her fortunes furnished her with a fair opportunity of practising that resignation which it teaches. History does not inform us what became of her, but if she lived a little longer she must have seen Decius forced to quit, to a new usurper, the throne that he had deprived her husband of, and from which Philip had precipitated Gordian. And the destruction of all these Princes must have taught her, that riches and honours do seldom continue long in families that have acquired them by wicked actions.

* Vaillan.

HERENNIA ETRUSCILIA.

Wife of DECIUS.

FOR a long time it was not known that Etruſcilia was wife to Decius; ſome hiſtorians would needs have it that he was married to Orbiana, but it is generally taken for granted that Orbiana was wife to Hoſtilian his ſon, and that Etruſcilia was his. No mention is made of her family or country. Her medals give her but little beauty to boaſt of: they repreſent her with ſmall eyes, a diſagreeable countenance * and a mean air. She had a great many children that were born before ſhe came to the Empire, and, together with the title of auguſt, all the honours that were uſually given to the Empreſſes were conferred upon her; but ſhe did not enjoy them long, for ſhe owed them to the revolt of her huſband, and the glory of bad actions is but of ſhort duration.

Decius was born in a village in Pannonia, and ſerved with great reputation under Maximinus and other Emperors. He was a man capable of doing good ſervice, as well in peace as in war, and had a great many good qualities. But he eclipſed the merit of them by that furious barbarity with which he perſecuted the chriſtians, and with which he ſignalized the beginning of his reign; for never did Emperor ſpill the blood of Chriſtians with ſo much brutality.

He had ſcarce taken poſſeſſion of the empire when he had it to defend againſt an irruption of the Scythians, who ſpread a terror through all the neighbouring provinces. The Emperor ſent his ſon Decius into Thrace to put a ſtop to the rapid courſe of the barbarians, but though this Prince

 wanted

* Birag. Vaillant.

wanted neither reſolution nor conduct, he ſaw the town of Philippopolis taken before his face, where there was an infinite number of people put to the ſword. This * misfortune obliged the Emperor to go and command the army in perſon, and in effect, his preſence ſoon changed the ſituation of affairs. He beat the Scythians and the other barbarous nations that had joined them, took away from them all they had conquered, and obliged them to obandon all the country they had taken poſſeſſion of. This ſucceſs made him hope for ſtill greater, and reſolving to take advantage of the conſternation his enemies were in, he was determined utterly to extirpate them.

Trebonius Gallus, governor of Mæſia, put this deſign into his head at the very time when he was hatching a ſcheme for taking poſſeſſion of the throne. As he had known it filled by perſons who had as little right to it as himſelf, he thought he might expect the ſame good fortune. Decius, without knowing it, was labouring to promote the deſigns of this ambitious man; for being deceived by the falſe marks of zeal and affection ſhewn him by Gallus, he was contriving with him, the means of deſtroying the Scythians, not dreaming that this perfidious wretch held, at that inſtant, a ſecret correſpondence with the barbarians to ruin the Roman army. The Emperor fell a victim to this treaſon, for the enemy advancing to fight him, he charged them ſo briſkly that he killed a great number of them. But Gallus had given the Barbarians notice to draw up their troops near a moraſs not far off, and then told the Emperor that he could never have a better opportunity of deſtroying them. That he had nothing to do but to purſue the Scythians towards the moraſs, and it would not be poſſible for them to eſcape.

The

* Ammian. Marcel. lib. 31.

The Emperor, forgetting his uſual prudence upon this occaſion took his advice, and intending to drive the enemy into the bog, was ſo far engaged in it himſelf, that he was either ſmothered in the mud *, or elſe was ſo expoſed to the arrows of the enemy, who were concealed, that they killed him. Thus periſhed this Emperor, whoſe memory will be ever deteſted on account of his cruelty to the Chriſtians; and with him, fell all the honours and fortunes of Etruſcilia.

* Victor. Epit. Zozim. Lactan. de Mortib. Perſec.

HOSTILIA SEVERA,
Wife of GALLUS.
ETRUSCILIA,
Wife of VOLUSIAN.
ORBIANA,
Wife of HOSTILIAN.

THERE is ſo much obſcurity in the hiſtory of thoſe Emperors, that reigned from Philip to Valerian, that ſcarce any thing certain can be advanced concerning them. What one author aſſerts is contradicted by another, and there is ſcarce any fact in which they agree. We have ſeen by what perfidiouſneſs Gallus came to the empire. Hiſtory gives him for a wife, Hoſtilia Severa, and yet ſays nothing of her. If it be of her that the chronicles of Alexander ſpeak, when they mention the fury of an Empreſs who cut her huſband's throat, we cannot entertain a very advantageous opinion of her. This however, is not of a piece with the account we have of Gallus's death in another manner; for we find that this Prince was maſſacred, together with Voluſian his ſon at Terni, whither he was gone to fight Æmilian.

Voluſian, according to the opinion of a great many, married Herennia Etruſcilia, daughter to the Empreſs of that name and of Decius. They affirm that Gallus made this match, and at the ſame time adopted Hoſtilian, brother to his daughter-in-law, that he might not be reckoned capable of ſo black an action as that of having cauſed Decius and his army to periſh. But this artifice did not exempt him from the odium of that horrid crime, nor from the puniſhment that was due to it. Æmilian revenged Decius by taking up arms againſt

againſt Gallus, which revolt alſo met with its deſert, by the ſoldiers rebelling and aſſaſſinating Æmilian.

We have already obſerved that Hoſtilian's wife was Barbia Orbiana. There are medals that repreſent that Emperor on one ſide, and on the other Orbiana, who ſeems to have been rather handſome than otherwiſe; this is ſufficient to juſtify the aſſertion of thoſe who deny that ſhe was wife to Decius, as ſome will have it. It is true that many imagine there were two Empreſſes of that name, one of which was wife of Decius, and the other of Hoſtilian, who, they ſay, was only ſon-in-law to Decius; but there are ſo many difficulties in this and ſo little probability, that I do not ſee how we can allow of it without being much embaraſſed. Hoſtilian died of the plague at Rome, after Decius's death.

MARINIANA,
Wife of VALERIAN.

SALONINA,
Wife of GALLIAN.

PIPARA,
Concubine of GALLIAN.

ZENOBIA,
Wife of ODENATUS.

VICTORIA,
Wife of the Tyrant VICTORINUS.

THE ladies are far from being incapable of heroiſm: there are many inſtances of women's joining, to virtue and ſweetneſs of temper, a maſculine courage, great intrepidity, and other warlike qualities, which ſufficiently proves that great talents are common to both ſexes. There are abundance of authors who have made it their buſineſs to celebrate the praiſes of ſuch heroines, as have acquired immortal honour by their great actions; but it may be affirmed, that Zenobia and Victoria hold the firſt rank among ſuch as were moſt diſtinguiſhed and moſt remarkable. We ſhall ſee them an honour to the age in which they lived, by the rare and uncommon abilities, which enabled them to govern and defend the empire; to the ſhame of all thoſe Emperors that diſhonoured their dignity by their voluptuous and effeminate lives; whilſt theſe Princeſſes, by the moſt glorious military exploits and conſummate prudence, have deſerved an everlaſting eſteem and reputation.

Æmilian having been maſſacred, the ſoldiers proclaimed Valerian Emperor, who commanded the

the army of Gallus. This general had acquitted himſelf with great honour in ſeveral important military employments, which ſeemed to pave the way for him to the empire, and of which every body thought him worthy. He had (beſides a noble original) all the qualifications neceſſary to form a great man. He was civil and polite in his manners, had an honeſt upright heart, and vaſt experience in the art of war. He was mild, judicious, grave, an enemy to vice; and, as to his perſon, tall, well made, had a majeſtick air and a robuſt and excellent conſtitution. For all which reaſons his election was ſo univerſally approved of, that it looked as if the votes of all the orders of the town and the army, had been collected for that purpoſe.

Valerian had two wives. The name of the firſt, who was mother to Gallian, is not known; the ſecond was called Mariniana, by whom he had young Valerian. Many people have thought that ſhe was daughter to Carvilius Marinus, who in the reign of Philip, commanded the army in Pannonia. Her medals give her a grave and ſerious air, and it is conjectured that Valerian made choice of her for that reaſon, as hoping that her behaviour would be conformable to her phyſiognomy.

Valerian took great care of his children's education, but it did not altogether anſwer what he expected; ſo true it is that nature and conſtitution often get the better of inſtruction and example. Gallian had indeed all the good qualities that a Prince ought to have. He was extraordinary handſome, affable, generous, liberal, fond of doing good offices, never refuſing what was requeſted of him but with a viſible concern in his countenance, which conſol'd thoſe whom it was not in his power to gratify. He had a great deal of very agreeable wit, and compoſed well both in proſe and

verſe; underſtood perfectly the art of war, and, upon occaſion, could perform the duty of a ſoldier as well as that of a general. But, on the other hand, he had great vices that ſullied and eclipſed all his virtues. He was ſo revengeful that he carried his reſentment to the utmoſt degree of cruelty; and ſo jealous, that he could not bear any body that had more reputation than himſelf. His careleſſneſs and indolence was ſuch that he gave himſelf up intirely to his pleaſures, and neglected affairs of the greateſt importance. He ſuffered, with brutal ſtupidity, the greateſt indignity and diſgrace that had ever befallen the Roman empire, by baſely abandoning his father to the inſults of the Barbarians, and giving himſelf no trouble about releaſing him from the cruel captivity he endured among them. As for Gallian, he revived the luxury of the moſt effeminate Emperors. He was always ſerved in veſſels of gold enriched with diamonds. His robes and ſhoes were covered with precious ſtones, and his affectation extended even to his hair, which was powdered with gold duſt. He was ſo voluptuous and extravagant that he deſpiſed all ordinary Pleaſures, being delighted with nothing but what was difficult to be obtained, and would eat no fruit but ſuch as was out of its natural ſeaſon. He did not limit his pleaſures to theſe whims and fancies, but plunged himſelf into all thoſe ſhameful debaucheries that are moſt apt to debilitate both body and mind, ſo he was quite unmindful of the bad condition the empire was in, tho' it required his utmoſt care and vigilance.

His brother, young Valerian, had all the neceſſary good qualities without any conſiderable faults. As to his perſon he was perfectly well proportioned, had an agreeable countenance, and ſomething ſo civil and affable in his behaviour, that he won the hearts of all that approached him.

He

He was learned beyond what could be expected at his age, and knew how to temper the vivacity of his wit with good ſenſe. Such were the ſons of Valerian. This great man having a mind to take from them all opportunities of debauchery, married them; and many are of opinion, that two of the princes eſpouſed two ſiſters *, natives of Clazomena, a town in Ionia, that Valerian's wife was named Cornelia Supera, and that of Gallian Salonina; but nothing can poſitively be aſſerted either about their names or family.

Salonina, whom the Greek Medals call Chriſogona, was † extremely handſome; and, what was infinitely more valuable than beauty, had prudence and virtue, which wonderfully ſet off her charms. She had read a great deal, and much eſteemed learned men, whom ſhe honoured with her protection, particularly the philoſopher Plotinus, who often received marks of her generoſity. The ſenate, after the election of Valerian, having declared Gallian, Cæſar, conferred upon Salonina all the honours and titles that had uſually been given to the Empreſſes, and it may be affirmed, that in ſo doing they honoured virtue and merit. She had many children by Gallian. Cornelius Saloninus ‡, Gallian, Julia, and Gallia are the moſt ſpoken of.

The great qualities of Valerian cauſed extraordinary rejoicings at Rome when he was choſen Emperor. The Senate confirmed the election unanimouſly, and declared the Empreſs Mariniana Auguſt. Her exaltation only ſerved to make her modeſty and humility more conſpicuous. It was a great ſatisfaction to the Emperor to ſee in his wife and daughter-in-law the virtues of which he gave

* Triſtan. Comment. Hiſtor. † Vaillan.
‡ Triſtan.

gave them ſo illuſtrious an example; but the ſcandalous life his ſon Gallian led, gave him, on the other hand, as much diſpleaſure as it did to Salonina, to whom he ſhewed the greateſt coolneſs and indifference, whilſt other women were poſſeſſed of his real eſteem and affection*. Valerian, whoſe auſterity would not permit him to wink at theſe ſhameful proceedings, often reprimanded his ſon for his irregular life; but theſe wiſe remonſtrances produced no good effect; on the contrary, they made Gallian hate his father, and rejoice that he was in captivity. This misfortune happened to him in the 6th year of his reign, which was ſo fatal to Rome, for never was there known a time when the Romans had ſo many enemies upon their hands at once: there were ſcarce any of the provinces that did not revolt. No leſs than 30 tyrants laid claim to the Empire, and moſt inſolently abuſed the authority they had uſurped.

Valerian was very ſucceſsful in the beginning of theſe wars, but that of Perſia was fatal to him. Sapor, their king, who had given Gordian a great deal of trouble, having conquered Armenia, carried his arms into Syria, took Antioch, the Capital of the Eaſt, and then made terrible havock in Cappadocia, which he ravaged, and took immenſe riches away with him. Valerian, much afflicted at theſe loſſes, went into the Eaſt, and endeavoured to repair them, but a much worſe diſaſter happened to him in that country; for having imprudently, and without precaution, expoſed himſelf to an interview with Sapor (who, a little before had gained ſome advantage over the Romans) the enemy ſeized and carried him priſoner into Perſia. Some affirm, that he was taken after the loſs of a battle. Be it as it will, Sapor

* Trebel. Pol.

por uſed his victory, or his treachery, with great inſolence. He led Valerian, cloathed in the Imperial purple robe, in triumph; made him a ſpectacle of deriſion to the barbarous nations, and puſhing his brutality to the higheſt degree of exceſs, exacted from the Emperor ſuch mean and ſhameful offices as would not have been put upon the vileſt ſlave, even ſo far as to make uſe of him by way of a footſtool when he was to mount his horſe, or ſtep into his chariot. A ſtrange viciſſitude of fortune, which teaches us that there is no permanent felicity in this world, and that every thing is liable to revolutions.

Mariniana had the ſame fate with her huſband, and fell into the hands of the Perſians. Sapor * reſpected neither her ſex nor her dignity. He treated her with the utmoſt brutality, ſo that a Roman Empreſs was forced to ſubmit to ſuch mortifications as would ſcarce have been put upon the meaneſt of women. There are but few people that have philoſophy enough to endure ſuch heavy ſtrokes of fortune as theſe. Mariniana, beſides all her own ill uſage, had always before her eyes that of Valerian. The Perſians made their chains daily more inſupportable, by adding to their miſerable condition the moſt outrageous affronts. The poor unfortunate Empreſs, not being able to bear it any longer, died, and had the vexation of leaving the moſt illuſtrious perſon on earth, in the power of his bitter enemies, who made a jeſt of his calamities.

The news of Valerian's, and Mariniana's captivity, threw the Empire into the deepeſt affliction; but if there was any body that ſeemed inſenſible of it, it was Gallian. This unnatural ſon heard it with ſtupid indifference; and when the compliments of condolence were made him upon

* Vaillan.

upon that occaſion, he anſwered very coldly, that he knew his father was mortal, and conſequently liable to the ſame miſchances with other men, and that he had at leaſt this conſolation, that if his father was unhappy, he had always performed his duty, and fought valiantly. He ſhewed no ſigns of grief, but went to Rome, and, inſtead of taking proper meaſures for the Emperor's deliverance, he minded nothing but his infamous pleaſures and debaucheries, paſſing the nights in brothels, and the days in the baths.

Salonina was the more ſenſible of her huſband's contempt, as her beauty and conduct was ſuch as intitled her to his utmoſt regard and affection. But his tranſitory amours were not what gave her moſt uneaſineſs; a very formidable rival became the object of her jealouſy. It was Pipa, or Pipara, daughter of Attalus, king of the Marcomans, a Princeſs whoſe charms were much talked of, and the report of which kindled in Gallian's breaſt ſuch a paſſion, that he imagined the happineſs of his life depended upon poſſeſſing ſo amiable a perſon. He had, however, but ſmall reaſon to flatter himſelf with hopes of ſucceſs in this affair, where his authority was not ſufficient to command it. The Princeſs was not his ſubject, and therefore not in his power. The Roman laws did not admit of his marrying a ſtranger, and there was none that the people had a greater veneration for. This law had coſt Titus and Berenice many a ſigh, and many a tear; nor did the ſon of Veſpaſian think proper to infringe it, however ardent his love was for that charming Jeweſs.

All this was well known to Gallian, but being full as amorous, and leſs ſcrupulous than Titus, he ſought for expedients that might furniſh him with the means of gratifying his paſſion, without openly

openly violating the laws; and the melancholy ſituation the affairs of the empire were in, he looked upon as a happy conjuncture. The irruptions of the Barbarians, in almoſt all the provinces, alarmed all the world; for the Roman empire ſeemed upon the very brink of its ruin. Gallian taking advantage of this general conſternation, but having much leſs at heart the intereſts of the republick, than his own private amour, aſſembled the ſenate, repreſented to them this prodigious number of enemies that ſeemed to be united for its utter deſtruction; that it was impoſſible for one Emperor to reſiſt ſo many uſurpers; for which reaſon he had thought proper to make an alliance with ſome foreign prince, by whoſe aſſiſtance he might be ſupplied with ſuch an army of auxiliary troops as ſhould enable him to ſuſtain all theſe wars. That Attalus, king of the Marcomans, ſeemed to him the propereſt for this purpoſe, and beſt able to defend the Romans. And that, in order to make Attalus the more zealous in behalf of the Romans, he imagined the beſt thing he could do would be that he ſhould marry that prince's daughter.

Gallian did not make this propoſal but out of complaiſance, and ſome little regard for decency, for he knew very well that no-body durſt contradict him. There was not remaining in the ſenate the leaſt ſhadow of liberty or uprightneſs; the Emperor governed its opinions, and reverſed its decrees when they were not conformable to his will and pleaſure. This ſtep then being taken, Gallian ſent an embaſſy to Attalus to demand his daughter. Formerly there was no Prince upon earth but what would have taken ſuch an alliance for the greateſt honour, and have purchaſed it at any rate; but matters were not now upon that footing; the Romans were no longer feared

and

and reſpected as they had been even by the greateſt monarchs, who paid them homage, either voluntarily or by force. The barbarous nations were now convinced by experience that the Romans were not invincible, for they had ſeen upon the throne Emperors more worthy of their contempt than fear; from whence it proceeded that foreigners no longer regarded either the Roman arms, or the decrees of the ſenate.

Attalus lent a favourable ear to this propoſal, and ſeemed highly ſenſible of the honour that was deſigned him; but being more crafty than the Roman, and knowing how much Gallian was ſmitten with his daughter, he was reſolved to make him purchaſe her; ſo he ſtarted ſuch difficulties as could not be got over without Gallian's yielding up to him part of Pannonia; and it was upon theſe conditions, that the princeſs Pipara was obtained, and conducted to Rome. The beauty of this charming ſtranger augmented Gallian's eſteem for her; he had not only the affection of a huſband, but the complaiſance of a lover *, and carried his weakneſs ſo far, always to carry about him a lock of her hair †.

It was well for Solonina that ſhe had acquired command enough of her temper to bear, with leſs uneaſineſs than might be expected, this new amour; ſhe contented herſelf with the outward civility that her huſband was pleaſed to beſtow upon her, and learnt philoſophy enough to wink at his gallantries. The love ſhe had for the ſciences ſerved to amuſe her, and divert her thoughts from ſuch reflections as would otherwiſe have been very troubleſome. She had gained a great reputation among the learned, which, together with

* Excerpt. Aurel. Victor. † Trebel. Pol. de Soloni.

with the reſpect ſhewn her by all the orders of the town, made her amends for the loſs of her huſband's heart, and which Pipara had robbed her of. Her wiſdom, prudence, and ſweetneſs of temper procured her the love of all the Romans. Her behaviour was ſuch as could not but win every body's affections; for not the leaſt pride or haughtineſs was to be ſeen in her whole deportment. Her goodneſs frequently induced her to ſacrifice her intereſts, and her indulgence was ſuch as always inclined her to forgive any that had injured her. This appeared upon an occaſion where ſhe even ſeemed to carry her clemency a little too far.

There happened to arrive at Rome a jeweller, who, among ſome diamonds of great price, had a great many falſe ſtones. Some were of glaſs, but they imitated the true ones ſo well, that there was ſcarce any body ſkilful enough to find out the difference. This perſon went to court, and preſented his jewels to the Empreſs, who was ſtruck with their beauty and luſtre; ſhe choſe out thoſe ſhe liked beſt, and paid the price. The falſe being moſt brilliant and beſt ſet, ſhe pitched upon them. She ſhewed her purchace to the ladies and courtiers, who greatly admired them, but upon a cloſer examination the cheat was diſcovered. The Empreſs being much vexed, and aſhamed at having been impoſed upon, gave orders to arreſt the merchant; but not being deſirous to carry her revenge very far, ſhe contented herſelf with putting him in a terrible fright.

The jeweller was congratulating himſelf on his good ſucceſs, when he was ſeized * and conducted to priſon. They gave him to underſtand, that he was condemned to be torn to pieces by lions in the amphitheatre. The appointed day being come,

* Trebel. Pollio. Gallian.

come, the people flocked thither in great multitudes, to ſatisfy their curioſity; the criminal was brought out, and every moment expected to ſee half a dozen famiſhed lions let looſe upon him. The eyes of the people were fixed upon the den, where they were told the beaſts, that were to devour the jeweller, were ſhut up. The ſignal being given, the door of the cave opened, and the jeweller almoſt dead with fear. At laſt, out flies a cock directly in the face of the malefactor, who was placed cloſe by the den, which made him cry out and tremble prodigiouſly. The ſpectators, who expected a more bloody ſcene, could not forbear laughing heartily at the terror the merchant was in. An herald immediately proclaimed with a loud voice, that one trick had been revenged by another; and this was all the puniſhment that was inflicted upon the offender.

It would have been happy for the inhabitants of Mæſia if Gallian had been as merciful, but he puniſhed that province with the utmoſt rigour for having encouraged the revolt of Ingenuus, but whoſe death did not deter many others from rebelling. Gallian's effeminacy, and the little care he took of the government, expoſed the ſovereign authority to ſuch a degree, that it fell a prey to any body that could lay hold of it, ſo that every day a new tyrant appeared. One of the moſt formidable was Caſſius Poſthumius, governor of Gaul. He was a man of obſcure birth, but had the reputation of being an extraordinary general, and great politician, poſſeſſed of excellent talents, as well for ruling a kingdom as for defending it valiantly, equally experienced in war and in peace. Gallian thought him a perſon of ſo much merit, that he truſted him with the education of his ſon Saloninus, and the command of the Army in Gaul:

Gaul: he even imagined he had diſcovered in this officer an inviolable fidelity. But ambition corrupted him; he no longer looked upon Gallian as his ſuperior, but aſſumed the imperial purple at Cologne *, murdered Saloninus, and maintained himſelf in his rebellion during ſeven years.

In the mean time Valerian was the ſport of a barbarous court who inſulted his misfortunes with the utmoſt brutality; but what moſt afflicted him was the undutifulneſs of his ſon, and his being quite inſenſible of the miſerable captivity he groaned under. In effect, Gallian plunged in a voluptuous courſe of life, thought of nothing but how to pleaſe Pipara, and gain her affections †, indulging himſelf in the moſt ſhameful debaucheries; ſo that he ſeemed to forget intirely that his father, and moſt of the provinces were in the enemies hands; which ſtupidity emboldened the barbarians and tyrants to undertake what they pleaſed.

Sapor, eſpecially, had carried his conqueſts very far into the empire; but Odenat, king of the Palmyrenians, put ſome ſtop to his career. He was a prince of great courage, and inured to fatigue by the continual exerciſe of hunting, which he had been accuſtomed to from his childhood in the mountains of Palmyria, (a city in the deſerts of Syria upon the confines of Arabia) where he underwent heat, cold, and all the inclemencies of the weather with admirable patience. His anceſtors had been always friends to the Romans, and he himſelf was no enemy to them, but was obliged to keep meaſures with Sapor, whoſe power and ambition were become formidable to all the Eaſt; ſo when Valerian was taken priſoner, Odenat ſent Ambaſſadors to the Perſian loaded with mag-

* Trebel Pol. Trig. † Trebel. de Poſthum.

magnificent preſents; they alſo carried a ſubmiſſive letter congratulating him upon his victories, but at the ſame time entreating him to puſh his conqueſts no further for fear of irritating all the neighbouring princes. Sapor, whoſe proſperity had made him haughty and inſolent beyond meaſure, and looking upon Odenat rather as his ſlave than an independent king, deſpiſed his embaſſy, and expreſſed great diſpleaſure at the liberty this prince had taken in writing to him. He commanded the preſents to be thrown into the river, and tore the letter in pieces in preſence of the ambaſſadors, whom he charged to tell their maſter that he would ſoon let him know that it was not for a vaſſal to treat with his lord by ambaſſadors, and that he ſhould dearly repent his temerity if he did not expiate his fault, by coming to him immediately with his hands tied behind his back.

Odenat was extremely ſenſible of the affront, and was determined to humble the intolerable pride of Sapor. His wife Zenobia confirmed him in this reſolution, and encouraged him in his deſign. She was a moſt illuſtrious princeſs, originally of Syria, and a Jeweſs, if the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians are to be credited: ſhe deſcended from Cleopatra, queen of Egypt *, ſo famous for her beauty, and the misfortunes of Marc Antony her lover. Zenobia had inherited her charms, but not her failings: ſhe paſſed for the fineſt woman in the Eaſt, and had, withal, a certain maſculine air that ſeemed to ſhew her courage and intrepidity: ſhe was of a brown complexion, and had large black eyes, from whence proceeded ſuch fire and vivacity as was irreſiſtible. Over all her perſon were diffuſed charms that made her infinitely amiable, and the qualities of her mind were not leſs praiſe-worthy than her corporal perfections.

She

* Athanas. Epiſt. ad Solitar.

She had a vaſt capacity, and a courage incapable of yielding under difficulties. No undertaking could be too great for her abilities, natural and acquired; for ſhe had cultivated and greatly improved her mind by ſtudy. She ſpoke perfectly well the Grecian and Egyptian languages, and was miſtreſs of the eaſtern hiſtory, of which ſhe had made an abridgement. The philoſopher Longinus was her preceptor, and inſtructed her in all manner of ſciences: ſhe was alſo deſirous to know the Chriſtian religion, but had a bad maſter in Paul of Samoſates, who taught her his errors. She was naturally of a great, generous, and magnanimous diſpoſition, which made her in love with honour and glory. As ſhe was diſcreet and prudent in her œconomy, ſhe never made any unneceſſary expences; reſerved in her diſcourſe and behaviour, and ſo ſtrict an obſerver of order and diſcipline, that ſhe was both feared for her ſeverity, and loved for her clemency, tempering one with the other, and ſeldom preferring the neceſſity of puniſhing to the pleaſure of ſhewing mercy.

Never was heroine ſo indefatigable in military affairs: ſhe would frequently (notwithſtanding the delicacy of her ſex) march ſeveral leagues on foot with the troops. But none of her good qualities were more remarkable than her chaſtity: ſhe was not only exempt from all ſuſpicion of taking liberties that were not conſiſtent with virtue; but we read, that ſhe would never admit of any converſation with her huſband after ſhe perceived herſelf to be with child. This princeſs being then informed of the contumelious reception her huſband's ambaſſadors had met with from Sapor, and ſeeing the inſolent and provoking threats with which his letter was filled, perſuaded him not only to break off all further negociations with

the Perſian, but to enter into a ſtrict alliance with the Romans, in order to be revenged of him. Baliſtes commanded at that time the Roman legions in the Eaſt. He was a very ſkilful officer, full of reſources and expedients for the conducting and ſubſiſting an army. Odenat let him know his intentions, and his propoſals were received with great joy. He was put at the head of the army, and it was upon this occaſion that he performed all thoſe great actions mentioned in hiſtory. He beat the troops of Sapor, and obliged him to repaſs the Euphrates with ſhameful precipitation. He afterwards carried his arms into Meſopotamia, and conquered all the Eaſt.

Sapor, aſtoniſhed at this change of fortune, was glad to retire into his own dominions, and fled before Odenat; but the latter purſuing him vigorouſly into Perſia, ſhut him up in Cteziphon the capital, where he kept him in continual alarms. Zenobia, accompanying her huſband in all theſe military expeditions, ſhared with him both in the fatigue and the glory.

Theſe fortunate exploits re-eſtabliſhed the affairs of the empire. Rome celebrated them with the greateſt rejoicings, and looked upon Odenat as its chief ſupport. Then it was that the greateſt lords of Perſia were ſeen entring the city loaded with chains, and gracing the triumph of this prince, who was received with all poſſible marks of eſteem and reſpect; and Gallian, to honour the merit of the conqueror, made him general of all the Eaſt; for there were no dignities or employments but what fell ſhort of his deſerts. Odenat revenged the empire of the injuries and mortifications that Sapor had put upon it, and the Emperor found in him a general that was able to ſuſtain his fortunes. He had ſo much the more reaſon to advance him, in that, although ſovereign

reign maſter of the Roman troops, covered with laurels, and dreaded by the enemy: he added to the importance of his ſervices, the glory of a conſtant and unſhaken fidelity, at a time when moſt of the Roman generals had ſhook off the yoke of obedience, turned tyrants, and changed into ſo many empires the provinces they had been entruſted with. In effect, Macrian had taken the purple in Egypt, Valence in Greece, Piſo in Theſſaly, Aureolus in Illyria, and were become bitter enemies to their benefactors. Even Baliſtes had the baſeneſs to abandon the ſervice of the Emperor, and join Macrian, whoſe revolt he would have made very dangerous, if Odenat had not puniſhed him as he deſerved. Thoſe provinces which did not fall a ſacrifice to the uſurpers, were expoſed to the incurſions of the Barbarians; the Scythians over-ran Aſia, and the Goths made perpetual irruptions into Macedonia and Achaia. So many enemies being raiſed up at once, awaked Gallian out of his lethargy; but what reſolution could a prince take who was ſoftened with pleaſures, and enervated with all ſorts of debaucheries? Young Valerian repreſented to him the danger the empire was in, and perſuaded him to aſſociate Odenat, and make him his partner in the throne, in order to engage him, by his own intereſt, to defend the provinces that were to be his. Gallian did not heſitate about it, but made him his collegue.

He declared him Cæſar and Emperor, and gave him all the marks of ſovereignty, cauſing money to be coined with his effigies and inſcription.

Zenobia aſcended the throne together with her huſband. She was declared auguſt, and her ſons received the title of Cæſar. It muſt be acknowledged, that no Empreſs was more deſerving of this high rank; for of all thoſe that had been exalted to the

empire, either by birth or their fortune, few were exempt from ſome great vice or other; and the moſt that could be ſaid, even of the beſt of them, was, that they had ſome virtues mixed with their faults; but none were like Zenobia, endued with all thoſe talents and good qualities that were capable of doing honour to either ſex. Odenat, by new ſervices that he did the empire, proved himſelf worthy of the honour that was done him. He made more conqueſts, and eſtabliſhed peace throughout all the Eaſt.

Odenat's victories excited an emulation in Gallian. Thoſe who had his reputation at heart, made him, at laſt, ſenſible of the injury he did himſelf by leading a voluptuous life, whilſt his collegue was acquiring honour and glory; that he ought to ſacrifice his pleaſures to his duty, and take up arms in defence of the empire; that all theſe revolts were owing to his indolence, and might have been prevented if he could have prevailed upon himſelf to chaſtiſe the rebels in perſon. Gallian was ſubject to ſudden reſolutions that drew him out of his ordinary ſituation: it was not impoſſible for his intimates, by managing him artfully, to inſpire him with vigorous reſolutions. Theſe remonſtrances had ſo good an effect that he reſolved to tear himſelf from the arms of Pipara, and all his pleaſures. He put himſelf therefore at the head of his Army, and marched to fight Poſthumus, who had eſtabliſhed himſelf in his uſurpation. He ſhewed, in this expedition, more courage than was to be expected from a prince diſſolved in luxury, and an enemy to fatigue. He reduced the tyrant to ſuch extremities, that, finding himſelf not able to reſiſt the Emperor, he aſſociated Victorinus * in his dignity, or rather, his revolt. Victorinus was a man very ſkilful in the

* Trebel. de Victorin.

the art of war. Nature had given him all the talents that were neceſſary to form a hero; and hiſtory aſſures us, that he poſſeſſed all the good qualities of the moſt illuſtrious Emperors. But he was given to one vice that tarniſhed all his virtues: he was ſo amorouſly inclined, that he loſt the affections of his officers, by endeavouring to debauch their wives.

He was ſon of the famous Victoria, or Victorina, a princeſs of great courage and ambition, very little inferior to Zenobia in point of merit. She, eſpecially, had ſo much the art of managing the ſoldiers, that ſhe could do what ſhe pleaſed with them; and it was at her perſuaſion that Poſthumus choſe her ſon Victorinus for his collegue. She was, in ſhort, the moſt formidable of Gallian's enemies, for ſhe had an enterpriſing genius; whatever ſhe undertook ſhe executed with reſolution, and generally with ſucceſs; ſo that ſhe was looked upon as the moſt dangerous enemy to the Empire. She aſſumed the titles of auguſt, and mother of the armies, and maintained her dignity with great honour and reputation as long as ſhe lived. Thus was Victoria as much celebrated for her great and heroic qualities in the Weſt as Zenobia was in the Eaſt; and it may be ſaid, that the Empire was governed by theſe two women.

After Odenat had ſhut up the Perſians within their own limits, and recovered all that had been taken from the Romans, he made very good regulations for preſerving peace and tranquillity in the Eaſt. Zenobia received in thoſe countries all the honour that was due to her; and it was given her with pleaſure, becauſe every body was convinced that ſhe was worthy of it. It might reaſonably be imagined, that ſhe had nothing to wiſh for but the continuance of her good fortune; but

what condition is ſo happy as not to be imbittered with ſome vexation or other. Zenobia, upon the throne, was tormented with anxieties and jealouſies that interrupted her felicity; and this Princeſs, after having ſo glorioufly contributed to the elevation of Odenat's family, became its moſt cruel ſcourge.

Odenat had, by his firſt wife, a ſon named Herod whom he loved exceedingly, tho' he was not very deſerving of it. This young Prince was of a mild and humane diſpoſition, but like all the Orientals, a great lover of pleaſures and diverſions, fitter for gallantry than war. He carried his luxury to the higheſt pitch, and his father was ſo complaiſant as to indulge him in it by ſupplying his expences, for he made him a preſent of all the magnificent furniture *, precious jewels, and immenſe riches, that he had taken from Sapor, and even gave him all that Prince's concubines.

Zenobia had three ſons, Timolaus, Herennianus, and Waballath, from whom ſhe had great expectations. She educated them in the maxims and after the manner of the Romans, had them taught latin, and put them under the tuition of the famous philoſopher Longinus, who inſtructed them in the ſciences. In ſhort, ſhe omitted nothing that was neceſſary to qualify them for the throne, which ſhe intended them for, and hoped to prevail upon Odenat to adopt them; but Herod was a powerful obſtacle to her projects. This young Prince had been declared King of Palmyra jointly with his father, and when Gallian and the ſenate decreed the Empire to Odenat, they made his eldeſt ſon his collegue. As Odenat was extremely fond of Herod, Zenobia could not help being jealous of it, and from hence ſprung that invincible averſion ſhe always had for Herod, and the ill offices ſhe

* Trebel. Pol. de Herod.

ſhe never failed to do him upon every occaſion, which were ſuch as became the malice of a cruel ſtep-mother. Odenat, however, knowing how much Herod was hated by Zenobia, had only a greater affection for him.

That ſort of jealouſy that proceeds from ambition is the moſt dangerous kind. Zenobia, not being able to bear the thoughts of her ſon-in-law's mounting the throne, which ſhe imagined had been obtained more by her courage and advice than her huſband's merit, reſolved to procure, for her own ſons, the ſovereign authority; and not to ſcruple at any crime to gain her point. A ſon-in-law runs no ſmall riſk when a jealous ſtep-mother is looking out for means to put him to death, and the huſband frequently pays dear for the favours he has conferred upon any children he may have had by a former marriage.

There was in the court of Odenat a Prince called Meones nearly related to the Emperor. They happened to fall out as they were hunting together, for Meones had, ſeveral times, affected to kill any game that came near Odenat, and thereby deprive him of that ſatisfaction. Odenat being provoked at this want of reſpect, gave him injurious language. Meones was ſo piqued at this, that he threatened Odenat, who not being able to endure ſuch audacious behaviour, was going to kill Meones, and would probably have done it if Herod had not thrown himſelf at his father's feet, and interceded ſo ſtrenuouſly for his couſin, that Odenat could not reſiſt him. The quarrel being thus made up, Meones was as much in favour as before, but he had malice at heart, and was determined, at one time or other, to be revenged of Odenat. We read that Zenobia did all ſhe could to heighten this diſcontent, and * never ceaſed to

* Trebel. Pol. de Menate. de Mæon. Zonar. Ann.

exaſperate them againſt each other, till ſhe had prevailed upon Meones to revenge the affront he pretended to have received. He communicated his deſign to Odenat's nephew, and feeding him with the moſt flattering hopes, gave him to underſtand, that, if they could get rid of Odenat, they ſhould have nothing to do but to poſſeſs themſelves of his fortune and riches. Young Odenat being thus deluded, entered into the conſpiracy, and they waited with great impatience for a favourable opportunity of putting their deſign in execution.

At the very time when this plot was going on, Odenat was acquiring great honour. He had marched againſt the Perſians, and was in a fair way of compleating their ruin. He beſieged Creziphou and took it, notwithſtanding the obſtinate reſiſtance he met with. He afterwards vanquiſhed the Goths, thoſe Barbarians who had over-run Aſia, and who no ſooner were informed of Odenat's approach, than they fled with precipitation; but Odenat came up with them time enough to make a great ſlaughter, and his preſence terrified both the Barbarians and the tyrants. All theſe advantages convinced the Romans that they could never value too much, a Prince that was capable of doing them ſuch eſſential ſervice, and did not doubt but the affairs of the Empire would ſoon be put on a better footing than ever under the conduct of this great man. But the gods, ſays a hiſtorian, * being irritated againſt the republick, had reſolved to give them the greateſt mark of their diſpleaſure by depriving them of their chief ſupport.

Odenat having ſo glorioufly finiſhed this campaign, halted at Epheſus, and made a conſiderable ſtay in that city to keep the enemy in awe. He had his ſon Herod with him, and being one night at

* Trebel. Pol. de Oden.

t ſupper, a troop of the conſpirators ruſhed into he room and brutally maſſacred both father and on. Meones and young Odenat were the authors f this treaſon, and by that means, gratified the mbition of Zenobia.

The death of Odenat was reckoned the greateſt misfortune that could poſſibly befal the Empire. Gallian, knowing, how difficult it would be to epair ſuch a loſs, was extremely afflicted at it. The face of affairs, and particularly of Odenat's family, were quite changed. Zenobia cauſed her ons Herennian and Timolaus, to aſſume the purple robes and the other imperial ornaments, and preſented them with great pomp and magnificence o the army. She ſeized the empire in their names, and took the title of Queen of the Eaſt, which ſhe preferred to that of Empreſs. It gave her great pleaſure to hear of Victoria's grandeur in thoſe countries, where ſhe made and unmade Emperors at pleaſure, and, of her own authority, took the titles of Auguſt and Mother of the Armies. She intereſted herſelf extremely in every thing that concerned Victoria, and wiſhed for nothing ſo much as to be able to join her forces to thoſe of this amazon, that they might together conquer the whole world; * a project worthy of Zenobia's courage and ambition.

The Emperor Gallian being informed of Zenobia's behaviour, did no longer look upon her as an ally zealous for the good of the Roman Empire, but as one that was building her own fortune on the ruins of the republick. Zenobia, to ſay the truth, ſeemed to have ſome ſuch deſign; and did not ſhew Gallian all that complaiſance and reſpect that Odenat did upon all occaſions, who never failed to communicate to him all his deſigns and undertakings. She demanded of the Romans nei-

* Trebel. Pol.

ther ſuccour nor advice, but governed the eaſt with an abſolute and independent authority. Gallian took ſuch meaſures as he thought would put a ſtop to her proceedings and humble her pride; he ſent Heraclian into the eaſt to command the troops, and gave him ſecret orders to attack Zenobia as ſoon as he ſhould have a fair opportunity. But as he knew her to be a woman not to lay down her arms and diveſt herſelf of the ſovereign power, which ſhe had taſted the ſweets of, his pretence was to ſubdue entirely the Perſians, and flattered himſelf that, the true reaſon of his ſending Heraclian being thus concealed, ſhe would not be alarmed at his arrival; but it was no eaſy matter to impoſe upon Zenobia. She looked upon Heraclian as a man ſhe ought to ſuſpect, and therefore took care to prevent his making a party in the eaſt, by marching directly to meet him. She accordingly gave him battle and defeated his army. She ſhewed by this action, that the war under her conduct was not leſs formidable than in the hands of Odenat, and that there are heroines capable of the greateſt undertakings. She proved the truth of this aſſertion in the eaſt, whilſt Victoria ſufficiently demonſtrated it in Gaul. The latter governed in the name of her ſon Victorinus, who had cauſed himſelf to be declared Emperor. We have obſerved that he might be compared to the greateſt Princes for his excellent qualities. He had * the courage of Trajan, the clemency and mildneſs of Antoninus, the gravity of Nerva, and the authority of Severus, but all theſe virtues were extremely eclipſed by his incontinence. It is true that after he came to the Empire, he denied himſelf for ſome time, but nature got the better of his reſolutions, and returned with greater violence than ever. He kept no meaſures; but

* Trebel. Pol. de Victorin.

but, without reſerve or decency, gave full ſcope to his inclinations; and imagining that his authority placed him above all fear or cenſure, he did not ſcruple to indulge himſelf by corrupting his officers wives.

A commiſſary of the proviſions named Attician, who had received this affront, was more delicate in that point than others whom the Emperor had diſhonoured, and who patiently ſubmitted to their diſgrace. Victorinus had debauched his wife, which he reſented in the higheſt degree. He was neither inſenſible nor politick enough to put up with ſuch an injury; he had it continually in his mind, and could not reſt without being revenged. Victorinus had offended ſo many in that way, without their ever daring to complain, that he did not apprehend he had any thing to fear from a perſon much below a great number of others, who were timorous enough to wink at theſe gallantries; but no enemy is to be deſpiſed. Whilſt Victorinus was at Cologne, thinking of nothing but his pleaſures, and leaving all affairs to the conduct of his mother, Attician was hatching a conſpiracy againſt him, which he carried on with ſo much ſecrecy and cunning, that Victorinus received a mortal wound, which afforded him but juſt time to declare his ſon Victorinus auguſt, and name him for his ſucceſſor. Victoria who had perſuaded him to this, confirmed it; and proclaimed her grandſon Emperor. This Prince was ſo young that he was incapable of governing, but ſo much the better for her, who deſired only the ſhadow of an Emperor, in whoſe name ſhe might exerciſe an abſolute authority.

The honour ſhe had procured for her grandſon was, however, fatal to him; for thoſe who had maſſacred his father, not thinking their lives in ſafety under an Emperor ſo much intereſted to

revenge his death, reſolved to free themſelves from the puniſhment they deſerved, by another crime; they therefore plunged into the breaſt of the young Emperor, the very poniards that were yet ſmoaking with his father's blood. This created more work for Victoria. She had been ſo accuſtomed to an unlimited power, that ſhe exhauſted her whole ſtock of contrivance to maintain it. Her chief care was to cauſe ſome general to be elected, who ſhould not be in a condition to govern by himſelf, for ſhe apprehended nothing ſo much as having a maſter. Marius, ſhe thought, would anſwer her purpoſe, and propoſed it to the legions. She ſo well employed her talent of perſuading, that ſhe got him proclaimed Emperor.

Marius had been an armourer; he was remarkable for his extraordinary ſtrength, of which he had given ſurpriſing inſtances. He had paſſed through all the degrees till he came to be a general, and when Victoria inveſted him with the purple, it was underſtood between them that, however willing ſhe might be to let him enjoy the honours of the government, ſhe reſerved the ſolid part of it to herſelf. Marius was no ſooner elected, than he aſſembled the ſoldiers, and ſpoke to them thus, *I am ſenſible, my comrades, that I am liable to be reproached with the meanneſs of my firſt occupation: I ſhall not go about to deny that I have handled iron, for you are all witneſſes to it; but, let them ſay what they will, I hope to handle it yet for the good of the empire; for it will be more honourable for me to do ſo at the expence of the enemy, than to plunge myſelf into pleaſures and effeminacy like Gallian, who has tarniſhed the ſplendour of his birth by his infamous debaucheries. Let people affirm that I was formerly an armourer, provided the Barbarians do but learn by experience that I ſtill know how to handle arms.*

This

This modeſt diſcourſe did more honour to Marius than his dignity; as it ſeemed an undoubted proof of his humility and moderation. There are but few upſtarts that have the courage to confeſs the obſcurity of their original; they are more apt to eradicate the leaſt footſteps of their former lowneſs, and hope, by their riches and great employments, to impoſe upon the world. The new Emperor, with all his affected ſimplicity, was not, it ſeems, proof againſt this ſort of bewitching pride, for a ſoldier, who had learned his trade under him in his ſhop, coming to congratulate him on his exaltation, was received with great contempt, which provoked him to that degree, that, not being maſter of his paſſion, he killed him on the ſpot; ſaying, this very ſword you made yourſelf.

The death of Marius furniſhed new matter for intrigues at court. Victoria, who trembled to think of an election that might not be to her mind, diſperſed her money very plentifully among the officers and ſoldiers. By theſe politick liberalities, ſhe had ſo acquired the affection of the legions as to be almoſt ſure of them upon any occaſion: She applied to them then in behalf of Tetricus, a Roman ſenator, who * commanded in one part of Gaul, and who was her relation. She ſucceeded; and as ſoon as he was choſen, ſhe diſpatched an expreſs to give him notice of it, and exhorted him not to refuſe a dignity that the army had thought proper to confer upon him. It is not very often that ſuch ſort of offers are rejected, for an empire is no preſent to be deſpiſed. Tetricus put on the imperial robe at Bourdeaux, and ſhewed that he was deſerving of the honour that was done him. He † gave his ſon Tetricus

* Trebel. de Tetric. Sen. † Eutrop.

the title of Cæſar, and had, ſoon after, an opportunity of ſignalizing his courage and experience in Spain.

While he was engaged in that war, Victoria had the government of Gaul, and the entire conduct of all affairs; for Tetricus, who was as cunning as ſhe, thought proper to humour her at firſt; but when he thought himſelf pretty well fixed in his authority he reſolved not to ſubmit any longer to the yoke of an imperious woman, who, he knew only made a tool of him, in order to engroſs all the power to herſelf, and gratify her ambition. Victoria, became the dupe of her own politicks, was ſtung to the quick at this ingratitude, and would infallibly have made him dearly repent it, if death had not prevented her. It is credibly reported that Tetricus, fearing the effects of her artifices and reſentment, took ſome method to put an end to her career. Thus periſhed the celebrated Victoria, who had filled Gaul, and indeed, all the empire with her reputation.

At the time when this Princeſs and Zenobia were gaining the admiration of all the world for their heroiſm, Salonina was as much eſteemed at Rome for virtues that were leſs tumultuous, ſuch prudence, mildneſs, and ſweetneſs of temper as nothing could alter or diſturb. The affronts that ſhe received from Gallian, were not capable of diminiſhing her affection to his perſon, nor her attachment to his intereſts, of which ſhe gave him an inſtance that had like to have been fatal to her.

The news of the Scythians making terrible havock in Illyria, coming to Rome, Gallian tore himſelf from his debaucheries, and put himſelf at the head of his army to fight them. Salonina, who feared for her huſband, and whoſe ſoft and effeminate conduct ſhe knew cauſed the troops to murmur, would needs bear him company in this ex-

expedition. Some days after the army was arrived in Illyria, and the Emperor had left but a ſlender guard in the camp, being marched againſt the enemy with all his forces, the Barbarians, knowing the Emperor's deſign, and that the camp was left in a manner defenceleſs, reſolved to carry off the Empreſs, which they preferred to the gaining of a victory. They therefore detached, for this purpoſe, a troop of reſolute ſoldiers proper for a bold undertaking, who were to fetch a compaſs that they might not be diſcovered. They marched ſo ſilently and with ſo much precaution, that they were in ſight of the camp without being perceived; and certainly Salonina was within the leaſt in the world of being their priſoner, and undergoing the ſame fate with Mariniana; for the enemy was but a very ſmall diſtance from the camp, when a ſoldier, who had gone out by chance, ſaw them and gave the alarm; and ſnatching up his ſword and ſhield, met the Barbarians and killed a great many of them. By this aſtoniſhing courage and reſolution, he gave his comrades time to come to his aſſiſtance.

It is no difficult matter to imagine the terror the Empreſs muſt have been in, who knew upon what errand they came, and that the Barbarians were perſuaded they could not poſſibly acquire a greater advantage over Gallian than to rob him of his wife. Pipara would, no doubt, have been much obliged to them, nor is it probable that Gallian would have broke his heart for the loſs. Be that as it will, Salonina came off with the fright, and returned to Rome with her huſband after he had made a terrible ſlaughter among the Scythians, which was more owing to his good fortune than his merit.

The Emperor was no ſooner arrived at Rome than Aureoles, who had been ſo often rebellious, re-

revolted again; and upon Gallian's approach, retired to Milan where he was beſieged. The generals of the army imputed all theſe inſurrections to Gallian's effeminate life. Marcian and Ceronius, eſpecially, thought themſelves highly diſhonoured by being obliged to obey a Prince that was ſo little worthy to command. Their ambition put them upon ſpeaking diſrepectfully of Gallian, with a deſign to give the army a worſe impreſſion of him than they had already, and in order to get themſelves choſen in his ſtead; but as they were ſecretly jealous of each other, they reſolved to get Claudius proclaimed Emperor, who was a very deſerving general and much eſteemed by the ſenate and the legions. The better to ſucceed in this ſcheme, they gave Gallian a falſe alarm, and had him told that Aureoles had quitted Milan, and was in ſight of the camp with a ſtrong detachment.

Gallian upon this, haſtned to put his troops in order of battle, but the conſpirators, watching a favourable moment, fell upon him and killed him, as well as young Saloninus and Salonina, who was deſerving of a better fate. Such was the death of this Empreſs, who had done great honour to her ſtation by * her great wiſdom and zeal for the publick welfare.

It was ſoon known that the new Emperor was worthy of the high rank to which he was raiſed: his valour became very formidable to the Barbarians and tyrants, and his other good qualities of the greateſt utility to the empire. He demonſtrated his courage and experience in every battle he fought, and gave ſufficient tokens of his wiſdom and prudence, by the excellent laws and regulations he eſtabliſhed in the government, proving himſelf equally meritorious in war and in peace.

While

* Bandur.

While he was employed in ſubduing the Goths, Zenobia diſplayed her extraordinary reſolution and intrepidity in the eaſt, where ſhe was making daily conqueſts and extending her dominions. She defeated the Egyptians and deſtroyed a great number of their troops. Claudius being informed of all theſe enterprizes, ſent Probus who was one of his moſt ſkilful generals into Egypt. The Palmyrians were at firſt put to flight, but Zenobia ſending them a reinforcement, the troops of Probus were ſurpriſed and defeated, and the whole country was again in her power. Claudius having the Goths upon his hands, ſeemed to take no notice of the affronts he received from the Queen of the eaſt, and not being at liberty to give her battle, he thought it his beſt way to amuſe her with a treaty of peace till he could have a fair opportunity of being revenged. He then, having nothing to fear from Egypt, turned all his forces againſt the Goths, over whom he gained that celebrated victory, which coſt three hundred and twenty thouſand of the Barbarians their lives. He alſo deſtroyed two thouſand of their ſhips; and thoſe that eſcaped being put to the ſword by the Romans, were cut off by famine and peſtilence. But this laſt ſcourge did not prey only upon the Goths, for the Romans were greatly afflicted by it, and the Emperor himſelf died of it at Sirmich. Quintillus his brother was elected in his ſtead, but not being found capable of performing the functions of that high poſt, they killed him and choſe Aurelian in his place. His character will be given in the following chapter, ſo we ſhall ſay no more of him at preſent than what relates to Zenobia's hiſtory. This Princeſs had conquered all Egypt, Syria, and the greateſt part of Aſia Minor. The alliance that ſhe had made with Claudius, and which was of his ſeeking, exceedingly

ceedingly flattered her vanity; for ſhe imagined the Romans were afraid, and had not courage to atack her. She was ſo confident of this, that ſhe did not now think it worth her while to renew the alliance with Aurelian that ſhe had concluded with his predeceſſor. Aurelian, provoked at being thus deſpiſed by a woman, reſolved to humble her; but knowing that Zenobia was not an enemy to be ſlighted, he aſſembled the greateſt part of his troops, and marched into Syria.

Zenobia hearing of all theſe preparations, prepared to give the Emperor a proper reception; and, being told of his approach, marched out of Antioch at the head of her army, having under her Saba, a very experienced General. She met the Romans near the river Orontes, and there the battle was fought. Aurelian, though full of valour and courage, had recourſe to a ſtratagem which ſucceeded. Zenobia's army was compoſed of Palmyrians, and other Orientals, who were in armour from head to foot, which was ſo cumberſome that they were ſcarce able to move. The Emperor having obſerved it, pretended to flee before her to entice thoſe Aſiaticks to a purſuit. In effect, they fell into the ſnare; for taking it for granted that the Romans were afraid to engage, they followed them ſo cloſe, that in a little time they were out of breath. Aurelian, like an experienced officer, took advantage of their wearineſs, and cauſing his troops to face about, attacked them with ſuch vigour, that he made a horrible ſlaughter of the enemy.

Zenobia was at the head of her army performing all that could be expected from the ableſt General, and encouraging her ſoldiers by her ſpeeches, geſtures and example; but her harangues had not, upon this occaſion, their uſual force. Her troops were put to flight, and ſhe had the mortification

mortification of abandoning the field of battle to the conqueror, and of retiring to Emeſſa. She was ſcarce got thither, and had collected the ſcattered remains of her army, than ſhe was compelled to a ſecond engagement; for Aurelian, reſolving to make the moſt of the ardour of his ſoldiers, and the conſternation of the enemy, followed and overtook them near Daphné. Fortune was no more favourable to her now than before, for her army was defeated; and when ſhe perceived that whatever efforts ſhe made, it was impoſſible to rally them, ſhe ſhut herſelf up in Palmyra, where ſhe imagined ſhe was ſafe. The town was defended by a numerous garriſon, and the queen had ſupplyed it with all ſorts of ammunition and proviſion*, ſo that it was reckoned impregnable. The Emperor was convinced that the ſiege of this place would be tedious, difficult, and bloody; but, on the other hand, he knew that the taking of it would put an end to the war, and that it would be very glorious for him to ſubdue Zenobia, whoſe reputation had filled all the Empire; whereas all the advantages he had hitherto gained would be to no purpoſe, if he gave that princeſs time to repair her loſs. This determined him to ſit down before it. He found the undertaking attended with all the danger and reſiſtance that he had foreſeen; and if the Romans made incredible efforts of valour to make themſelves maſters of the town, the beſieged were not at all inferior to them in defending it. Aurelian called all his experience and intrepidity to his aſſiſtance, and expoſed himſelf ſo much, that he was wounded with an arrow. Zenobia, who feared more than death the ſhame of gracing the triumph of the conqueror, ſhewed the courage, or rather fury, of an enemy drove to deſpair.

The

* Vopiſc. in Aurel.

The length of the ſiege, the uncertainty of the event, and the obſtinacy of the beſieged, made Aurelian repent, more than once, that he had undertaken it. He ſaw, with great vexation, that his conqueſts were likely to be interrupted, and all his laurels withered before Palmyra, and that by a woman, who gave him more trouble than he had ever met with from an enemy before. He knew that at Rome he was ridiculed, and made a jeſt of, to be thus baffled by a lady; but he was not aſhamed to give her the praiſe ſhe deſerved, by publiſhing that ſhe was not made of the ſame materials with the reſt of her ſex; but, on the contrary, was by much the moſt formidable enemy the Empire had. He wrote to his intimate friend Mucapor to juſtify himſelf. *I am informed*, ſaid he, *that with you people make their remarks upon my being at war with a woman, as if this queen was leſs to be dreaded than the moſt conſummate hero. I could heartily wiſh that thoſe who are ſo given to raillery, could ſee the aſtoniſhing quantity of proviſions, and all things neceſſary to the defence of a place, that ſhe has laid up in Palmyra. What arrows, arms, ſtores, and machines for throwing fire upon the aſſailants; what palliſadoes to hinder them from approaching the walls. To give you a juſt idea of Zenobia, I ſhall only ſay, that this princeſs does not defend herſelf like a woman, but like an experienced general, who fearing to incur the penalties of miſbehaviour, puts in practice all his ſkill and abilities to prevent his being conquered. And this I can aſſure you, that in order to get the better of Zenobia, we have need, that the Gods (ever propitious to the Roman arms) ſhould be favourable, and not fail us upon this important occaſion.*

Nothing does ſo much honour to Zenobia as this forced commendation given her by Aurelian, who without diſpute, was a great warrior, and a

a very good judge of true merit. It appears by this, that Zenobia was as much dreaded by Aurelian as he was by his enemies. It was not his fault if this war was not terminated by way of treaty. He offered it to Zenobia, and promiſed ſecurity to her, and all belonging to her, and to leave the Palmyrians in quiet poſſeſſion of all they enjoyed. But Zenobia was not a woman to put herſelf willingly in the power of the conqueror; far from coming to terms with Aurelian, ſhe gave him a haughty anſwer, capable of intimidating an Emperor that was leſs brave than he. In her letter ſhe ſays, *I am ſurpriſed that you ſhould make me propoſals of ſurrendering myſelf. So great a hero as you ought to know that it muſt be by actions of valor, and not letters, that enemies are compelled to yield. You are the firſt that ever made me ſuch a compliment, and might have been better acquainted with me than to talk in that ſtyle. I would have you call to mind, that I am deſcended from Cleopatra, and have not leſs firmneſs and reſolution than ſhe. Death ſeems to me, as well as her, a leſs evil than ſlavery; nor ſhould I think the greateſt dignity in the world worth purchaſing at the expence of my liberty. Do not imagine that you are ſpeedily to be maſter of Palmyra, for the powerful aſſiſtance that the Perſians are ſending us, are juſt at hand; the Saracens and Armenians will alſo help us, and how do you propoſe to deal with ſo many enemies, you who have found by experience, that a band of Syrian robbers have been able to beat your whole army? Our allies will preſently join us; we ſhall then bring down that pride of yours, which induces you to command us with ſo much haughtineſs to ſurrender at diſcretion.*

Aurelian was ſtung to the quick by this epiſtle, and was more than ever determined to take the town, coſt what it would. He ſurrounded it with his

his army to prevent its being ſuccoured; and a troop of Perſians having made an attempt to throw themſelves into the place, was entirely defeated. The Palmyrians were thunder-ſtruck at this accident; for, notwithſtanding what they had given out, their proviſions began to fail. Then it was that Zenobia, deſpairing of help, and ſeeing neither the Armenians nor Saracens come near her (for Aurelian had gained them by preſents) had but ſmall expectation of being able to preſerve the town. She foreſaw, on the one hand, all the miſeries that would be the conſequence of its being taken by aſſault; but on the other, ſhe could not bear the thoughts of falling into the hands of the conqueror, after the bragging letter ſhe had wrote. Her pride repreſented to her all the horror of ſlavery, and the ſhame of being compelled to follow the triumphal chariot of Aurelian. She choſe, therefore, to run all riſks rather than implore the clemency of an Emperor ſhe had provoked by her obſtinacy, and the haughtineſs of her letter. She knew ſhe could prevail on the Palmyrians to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity, and had ſome ſmall ray of hope that ſhe might yet preſerve the place, if it were poſſible to procure any aſſiſtance. She reſolved, then, to go out of the town ſecretly, and ſolicit the king of Perſia to furniſh her with the auxiliaries he had promiſed, and then to put herſelf at the head of the troops, and attack the Romans. This reſolution being taken, and having uſed all the neceſſary precautions that every thing ſhould, in the mean time, be carried on according to her directions, ſhe got out of the town very privately, and with few attendants. Aurelian, however, had notice of this eſcape, and knowing of what importance it would be to ſecure her, ſent after her ſome light horſe, who made ſuch ſpeed, that they

they overtook her upon the banks of the Euphrates, as ſhe was juſt going to croſs the river. She was treated with the utmoſt reſpect, and brought back to Aurelian.

The Emperor was in the greateſt tranſports of joy when he ſaw himſelf in poſſeſſion of Zenobia. He underſtood beter than any body the value of this piece of good fortune, which made him maſter of all the Eaſt, and put an end to a war that gave him infinite trouble and anxiety. But the more this event gave ſatisfaction to Aurelian, the more inſupportable was Zenobia's affliction. It would not be eaſy to deſcribe the wretched condition to which this Princeſs was reduced, who after having given law to the Empire, ſaw herſelf a priſoner, and deſtined to the mortifying extremity of ſerving as a trophy to thoſe enemies ſhe had often conquered. Her diſgrace did not, for all that, quite ſink her ſpirits; for in her countenance ſtill reigned that air of grandeur, and noble haughtineſs, ſo natural to thoſe who are born to command. Neither the preſence nor reproaches of Aurelian were capable of ſhaking her courage and reſolution: and when the Emperor aſked her how ſhe could ever think of acting as an enemy againſt the Romans, to whom ſhe owed her fortune, ſhe boldly anſwered, that indeed for his part, ſhe had always the greateſt eſteem and reſpect for him, becauſe ſhe knew him to be worthy of the Empire; but that ſhe had never looked upon Gallian, and all thoſe tyrants, who had taken the title as Emperors, but as perſons who diſgraced their dignity by their ſhameful and ſcandalous behaviour.

Zenobia's being made priſoner, was ſoon followed by the taking of Palmyra. The greateſt part of the inhabitants reſolved to hold out to the laſt, but the others oppoſed a deſign that could not

not be attended with any good conſequences, and muſt needs end in the deſtruction of the town; ſo that they demanded quarter of Aurelian, and opened their gates. The Emperor got immenſe riches in Palmyra, and after placing a good garriſon in it, went to Emeſſa, where he decided the fate of the captives. Thoſe who had ſhewn themſelves moſt zealous for Zenobia, and had eſpouſed her intereſts with too much warmth, were puniſhed with death. In that number was Longinus, who was accuſed of being the author of Zenobia's letter to Aurelian. The ſoldiers were very importunate that the Princeſs ſhould loſe her life; but the Emperor, though not very gallant, could not prevail upon himſelf to treat, with ſo much ſeverity, a queen who had defended the Roman provinces againſt the Barbarians with great valour and intrepidity. Aurelian alſo pardoned the youngeſt of her ſons, named Vaballath, who it is thought lived long after his mother's misfortune; but it is uncertain, whether he put to death Herennian and Timolaus, who had been declared Cæſars before Odenat died, or whether theſe princes were already dead.

By Zenobia's being taken, and the reduction of Palmyra, Aurelian added extremely to the reputation he had before acquired. His name became the terror of the kings and people of the Eaſt. They all ſent him Ambaſſadors, and preſents, to obtain his good graces; and it was obſerved, that Hormiſdas, king of Perſia, and ſon of Sapor, who had ſo brutally treated Valerian, was one of the firſt to do honour to Aurelian, by ſending him a chariot covered with plates of gold, and enriched with jewels, together with a purple mantle of ſo extraordinary a luſtre, that the Romans had never ſeen any thing comparable to it.

After

After the Emperor had reſtored tranquillity to the Eaſt, he ſet out for Italy, but was ſoon obliged to return. Some factious Palmyrians perſuaded the inhabitants to revolt: they maſſacred the garriſon and the governor, proclaimed Emperor a relation of Zenobia, and cauſed him to put on the Imperial robe. This news put the Emperor beyond all patience. He returned into Syria, and made ſuch diligence, that he arrived at Antioch before the Palmyrians knew that he was informed of their rebellion. But his approach ſtruck them with ſuch fear and conſternation, that they yielded without offering to defend themſelves. Aurelian treated them with the utmoſt ſeverity, he put all the inhabitants to the ſword without diſtinction of age or ſex, and entirely demoliſhed the town. This rigorous proceeding did not, however, prevent a new tyrant from ſtarting up. Tirmus, a native of Selucia, but who lived in Egypt, where he was very conſiderable, and was nearly related to Zenobia, undertook to head the remains of that party, and got himſelf proclaimed Emperor. His revolt was, at firſt, attended with ſucceſs, for he made himſelf maſter of Alexandria, and all Egypt; but he had the ſame fate that rebels generally meet with; he was taken, and expiated his audacious attempt by a horrible death.

The deſtruction of this rebel put Egypt again under the obedience of the Emperor, and ſerved to give Tetricus warning of what he was to expect. That ſenator had been for ſome time paſt weary of the authority he had uſurped, and had thoughts of making his peace with Aurelian. But it was not ſo eaſy for him to make his ſoldiers return to their duty; thoſe people are always inclined to ſedition; and as he had been beholden to them for his exaltation, they thought they had

a right to exact what they pleaſed of him. He lived in thoſe fears and apprehenſions that are inſeparable from an unlawful and tyrannical power, ſo preferred a private, but peaceable condition, to a tottering and precarious command. He went, therefore, and threw himſelf at the feet of Aurelian, to be dealt with as the Emperor pleaſed. The Emperor laid hold of this opportunity to attack the army of Tetricus: he came up with it near Chalons, upon the Marne, and cut them to pieces; for they fought without a chief, and conſequently without order. By this victory, Aurelian became maſter of Gaul, Spain, and England, which obeyed Tetricus; and, after having put matters upon the beſt footing, he went to Rome to reap the fruits of his labours, and was received with the greateſt applauſe and demonſtrations of joy.

For a long time paſt, the Romans had not ſeen ſo ſuperb a triumph. The captives of ſeveral nations followed the triumphal chariot with their hands tied behind them, which ſufficiently evinced the glory of the conqueror; but the principal ornament of this magnificent ſcene, and which, moſt of all, drew the eyes of the ſpectators, was the queen of the Eaſt, ſo loaded with chains of gold, and ſo great a quantity of diamonds, pearls, and other precious jewels, that ſhe was ſcarce able to carry them, but was forced, every now and then, to reſt and take breath. Tetricus and his ſon, ſome Egyptians of the greateſt quality, which were taken at the defeat of Tirmus, and the chief lords of Palmyra did alſo great honour to this ſplendid ceremony. It is true, people thought it ſomething indecent that the Emperor ſhould cauſe a woman and a Roman ſenator, who had been conſul, to grace the proceſſion along with the Goths, Vandals, and other Barbarians; but,

with regard to this, he fully juſtified himſelf to the ſenate.

This was the deſtiny of the celebrated Zenobia. Aurelian omitted nothing that could contribute to the mitigation of her misfortune, and to the making her condition ſupportable. He treated her with great reſpect, and made her a noble preſent of lands near Tivoli, juſt by Adrian's palace. Many are of opinion, that her ſon Vaballath retired into Armenia, where Aurelian gave him a principality: It is, however, certain, that ſhe left a ſon at Rome of that name. Baronius ſeems to think, that ſhe became a Chriſtian, and that Zenobius, biſhop of Florence, who lived in great friendſhip with St. Ambroſe, was deſcended from her family, but other credible hiſtorians contradict this.

The Emperor did every thing to repair the affront he put upon Tetricus, by treating him ever after with great kindneſs, ſometimes calling him his collegue, and even giving him the title of Emperor.

SEVERINA,

SEVERINA,

Wife of AURELIAN.

AURELIAN, of whom we have already ſpoken, was of very obſcure birth, but his meanneſs was obliterated by his ſuperior talents, his extraordinary merit, and by ſuch great actions that no-body thought too much was done for him when he was made Emperor. He had excellent natural parts, a robuſt and vigorous conſtitution, great courage, and a majeſtick deportment. He was vigilant, prudent, grave; a ſtrict obſerver of military diſcipline; but his great failing was cruelty, which made him inflict the ſevereſt puniſhments upon the ſmalleſt faults. He put a great number of ſenators to death upon ſlight ſuſpicions, or accuſations, without proof; and under pretence of correcting abuſes, he made a very bad uſe of the ſovereign authority with which he was inveſted. For which reaſon it was ſaid of him, that he ought to have remained always a general, but never Emperor; and that he was a good phyſician, but drew too much blood.

He married Ulpia Severina, who, as ſome modern hiſtorians believe, and upon good grounds, was daughter to Ulpius Crinitus, who pretended to be deſcended from Trajan, and whoſe virtues he had inherited. This alliance was advantageous to Aurelian; for as he was born without a fortune, he found great reſources in the generoſity of his father-in-law, who adopted, and ſhared his riches with, him.

Severina was not handſome, but had a great ſoul, and noble inclinations. She accompanied her huſband in all his expeditions, even when ſhe was Empreſs, and did not a little contribute to-

wards procuring him the affection of the troops, by a well-timed liberality, and by her engaging behaviour to the meaneſt ſoldier. It is from inſcriptions and medals that we have drawn the greateſt part of what we have reported with regard to her; for the hiſtorians do not ſo much as tell us her name.

As ſoon as Aurelian was proclaimed Emperor, he ſet himſelf about regulating the publick affairs, which were in great diſorder and confuſion. He carried his arms into the Eaſt with ſo much ſucceſs, that all the ſtrong towns, and even provinces, ſubmitted of their own accord, for fear of incurring his diſpleaſure, and feeling the effects of his anger. There was only the city of Thyana that pretended to make any reſiſtance; but that was done with ſo much courage and obſtinacy, as would, in all probability, have put a ſtop to his conqueſts, were it not for the treachery of one of the inhabitants that opened the gates to him *.

* Aurelian was ſo provoked at the obſtinacy of the citizens, that he ſwore he would not leave a dog alive. This oath made the ſoldiers believe, that the Emperor intended to deſtroy the inhabitants, and give up the town to be plundered. This expectation made them perform miracles, which, notwithſtanding, would have been to little purpoſe, had it not been for the baſeneſs of a townſman, named Heraclammon, who ſhewed the Romans a weak part in the fortifications, through which they might enter the place. As ſoon as it was taken, the ſoldiers prepared to ruin and plunder it entirely. But the Emperor oppoſing it, they put him in mind of his oath. Very well, replied Aurelian, I ſwore that I would not leave a dog alive in Thyana, ſo I conſent that you ſhould maſſacre all the dogs. [*Canem negavi in hac urbe me relicturum, canes omnes occidite.*] The perfidious Heraclammon was however,

It could not but be a new ſight to the legions to obſerve the empreſs, in the midſt of camps and armies, ſharing the fatigues of the war with the emperor, preferring the noiſe and tumult of arms to the luxuries and pleaſures of Rome, and doing honour to her ſex by military exploits. This, together with her bounty, procured her the eſteem and affection of the legions; they could not but eſteem a princeſs who diſtributed her riches among them, inſtead of waſting it, as other empreſſes had done, in ſhow and grandeur. Theſe gratifications were of great ſervice in keeping quiet the mutinous and ſeditious diſpoſitions of the ſoldiers, which had always been a moſt difficult matter. The ſenate, to ſhew their gratitude to the empreſs, and expreſs their ſenſe of her merit, cauſed a medal to be ſtruck in honour of her, with an inſcription, which attributes to her the glory of having won the hearts of the army, and of maintaining peace and harmony among the legions.

This was not the only mark of eſteem the Romans beſtowed upon her; for when Aurelian went thither to receive the reward of his good ſervices, ſhe ſhared with the Emperor in all the honours that were decreed him; and there had never been ſeen at Rome a more pompous triumph*, which was celebrated amidſt the ſincereſt acclamations of the people, and all the orders of the town. To this was added all the games and ſhows that had ever been exhibited upon the like occaſions, beſides a naval engagement that was performed with the greateſt magnificence. Thus Aurelian, by entertaining the citizens with theſe

* Vopiſc. in Aurel.

put to death for the reward of his treaſon; for the Emperor ſaid, that he who could betray his country, could never be faithful to any one.

theſe amuſements, cauſed all paſt ſufferings and calamities to be forgot.

After this the Emperor thought proper to give a token of his piety as well as grandeur, by erecting a very ſumptuous temple, and dedicating it to the ſun, a divinity which he revered with great ſuperſtition, and to which he attributed all the ſucceſs of his arms. Severina bore alſo a part in this ceremony, and in concert with her huſband, paid her homage to the god in the new temple. It was upon this occaſion that the ſolemn ſacrifice which was offered to the ſun (repreſented to us by the medals) was performed; ſo that Severina's piety ingratiated her as much with the citizens, as her military accompliſhments did with the troops.

A woman of this character certainly deſerved the love and affection of her huſband, and accordingly the Emperor thought he could never too much eſteem a Princeſs that followed his fortunes with ſo much courage and alacrity, ſharing with him all his dangers and troubles, and contributing ſo much to his glory and ſafety, by being liberal to the ſoldiers, and that with ſuch a grace, that they were more charmed with her manner of giving than the gift itſelf. Severina, however, with all her merit, could never perſuade the Emperor to be polite and complaiſant, or to abate any thing of a certain ruſticity which he always affected; and ſhe had the mortification to be refuſed a favour ſhe earneſtly requeſted of him.

Though purple was, at the time of the republick, the colour moſt in faſhion among all the ladies of quality, it was afterwards reſerved for the Emperors only, and became a badge of the ſovereign authority, ſo much, that edicts were iſſued to prohibit private perſons from making uſe of it. The ladies were indeed permitted to wear ſilk, but it

was, at that time ſo ſcarce and dear, that very few could pretend to carry their luxury ſo far as that came to.

Severina, by accompanying her huſband in all his wars, had acquired a martial air which ſhe was very proud of, and fancied that a purple mantle of pure ſilk would add to her natural liveline ſs and vivacity, ſo that ſhe longed exceedingly to purchaſe one.

This piece of finery could not be reckoned an immoderate expence for the firſt perſon in the world, who, one would imagine, was not ſo ſtrictly bound by general rules; nor could Aurelian, without the utmoſt degree of auſterity, refuſe that little ſatisfaction to a Princeſs for whom he ought to have had more indulgence for many reaſons; for if any thing could induce him to deviate from his uſual maxims, it might reaſonably be preſumed that he would do it upon this occaſion. But Aurelian was too rigid to be influenced by motives of decency and good manners. The Empreſs employed all her intereſt and ſolicitation to no purpoſe, for Aurelian ſtill perſiſted in his obſtinacy. He repreſented to Severina, that, by being clad in ſilk, ſhe would lower the value of gold; for though ſilk was very rare and curious, it ought not to be put in competition with the moſt precious of all metals.

Severina, who knew the Emperor was not a man to be eaſily perſuaded out of his reſolutions, was forced to acquieſce, and was the leſs ſurpriſed at this refuſal, as it was not the firſt mortification of that ſort ſhe had met with, when ſhe was deſirous to be diſtinguiſhed by rich ornaments*; for upon his coming to the empire, he allowed his wife and daughter no other furniture than what he had given them when he was a private officer.

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* Vopiſc. in Aurel.

This humour of the Emperor's was not attributed to that kind of ſordid avarice, that prevails upon ſome people, to grudge every little expence. It is true, that he was no friend to luxury and ſhow, but yet could not be accuſed of covetouſneſs, as was plainly proved by the uſe he made of his riches. The fault that might juſtly be imputed to him, was, that he did not know when to ſet bounds to his unreaſonable ſeverity, which made him a tyrant to the ſenate as well as a perſecutor of his own family, which he overwhelmed with affliction, by putting his ſiſter's ſon to death; and thoſe who have been moſt zealous in their commendation of Aurelian, and have compared him to Cæſar and Alexander (whoſe military talents he indeed poſſeſſed) have not been able to excuſe his inhumanity. By this exceſſive rigour he alienated from him the hearts of the Romans, who hated his government, and that occaſioned the conſpiracy againſt him, by which he loſt his life near Bizantium, when he was going to war with the Perſians.

Severina was witneſs to her huſband's misfortunes, and did not long ſurvive it. She had by Aurelian one daughter, who was mother of that Aurelian, who, in the time of Conſtantine the Great, was one of the moſt illuſtrious ornaments of the ſenate; and this is all that hiſtorians relate concerning Severina.

Of the Wife of TACITUS.

JULIA PROCLA,
Wife of PROBUS.

MAGNIA URBICA,
Wife of CARUS.

THE legions notwithſtanding Aurelian's ſeverity, regreted his death extremely, and refuſed to chuſe a perſon to ſuceed him for fear of pitching upon one of his murderers. The army wrote the ſenate a letter full of his praiſes, and imprecations againſt thoſe who had put him to death, and deſiring that they would make choice of one of their body that ſhould be worthy to ſupply his place. The ſenate was too well acquainted with the changeable and fickle temper of the ſoldiers, and knew too well the averſion they always had to ſuch Emperors as had been created by them, to expoſe any ſenator to the caprice of the troops. They had not forgot the tragical deaths of Balbinus and Pupian, who were not ſo brutally maſſacred, but becauſe they had received the ſovereign authority from the ſenate; and the miſerable end of thoſe two Princes gave them to underſtand what any Emperor had to expect that was not choſen by the army. Theſe prudent reflections determined the ſenate to requeſt that the legions would elect whoever they ſhould judge moſt deſerving of the throne.

Theſe mutual differences between the ſenate and the army took up ſix months, and yet during this ſort of inter-regnum, the provinces all remained very quiet and ſubmiſſive to the authority of the ſenate. But at laſt expreſſes arrived with news, that the Germans had paſſed the Rhine, and

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that the Syrians, no longer in awe of Aurelian, began to be in motion, the conſul Gordian aſſembled the ſenate and repreſented to them, that the election of an Emperor could no longer be deferred. Tacitus, whoſe age and quality gave him a right to ſpeak firſt, riſing up to give his opinion, all the ſenate with one conſent voted him the empire, ſaying, that he who was at the head of the ſenate ought alſo to be at the head of the armies.

Tacitus, who was a very wiſe and judicious perſon, excuſed himſelf, by alledging, that a magiſtrate who had paſſed his whole life at court and in the ſenate, and who was upon the brink of the grave, was not capable of undergoing the fatigues of war, and that the legions would never be brought to obey a ſenator who was become Emperor at once, without having paſſed through the military degrees; but this modeſty made him appear more worthy of it; and as to his great age, they mentioned Trajan, Adrian, and Antoninus, who had come to the empire when they were very old. They told him, that it was not his buſineſs to fight but to command, and that ſtrength of body was not ſo neceſſary a qualification in an Emperor, as a ſound judgment, according to the maxim of Severus, who uſed to ſay, that it is the head that commands and not the body, and that it was ridiculous to give the title of father of the republick to boys, who ſtand in need of their tutor's leſſons; that maturity of age produced wiſe and well concerted deſigns, whereas all the irregularities of Nero, Commodus and Heliogabalus, were leſs to be attributed to their vices than to their youth.

The importunity of the ſenate, and the ſolidity of their reaſons, prevailed upon Tacitus at laſt, to accept the empire, but he proteſted that he would do nothing of himſelf. The ſenate could not

not certainly make a more worthy choice, for in Tacitus were revived the moderation and integrity of thoſe wiſe ſenators that were ſo remarkable in antient Rome. If he was deſcended from Tacitus the hiſtorian, as is generally believed, he was of a very conſiderable family; but, be that as it will, his merit ſufficiently recommended him. As for his wife, no mention is made either of her name, family, nor country. She found in Tacitus, the ſame averſion to luxury that Severina met with in Aurelian, for her rank of Empreſs was the only thing that diſtinguiſhed her from the other ladies. The Emperor, her huſband, would never permit that ſhe ſhould wear richer clothes than ſhe had before his election; for he was looked upon as the author of the prohibition which his predeceſſor had made againſt wearing gold or ſilver. It is not to be doubted, but that the ſenate decreed the new Empreſs all the honours that they had been ſo prodigal of to others, and that they gave the moſt pompous titles to the wife of an Emperor that was of their own creating. They wrote to the governors of provinces, and to all the nations and kings in alliance with the Romans, that the ſenate had re-aſſumed their antient rights, that they would always, for the future, elect the Emperors, and that they had now made choice of one of their own members to fill the throne. That, from thenceforward, it ſhould be by authority of the ſenate that war or peace ſhould be declared; and in a word, that the republick, being re-inſtated in their privileges and prerogatives, intended to have the principal ſhare in the government. The ſenators congratulated each other upon the recovery of their liberty, and they made an experiment, that ſeemed to aſſure them, that neither the intereſt nor the will of the Emperor, would any longer, lay a reſtraint upon their votes;

for

for Tacitus, having requeſted the conſulſhip for his brother, the ſenate refuſed it. But this great joy was but of ſhort duration, for Tacitus, * after having given the greateſt proofs of his mildneſs, equity and juſtice, died of a fever according to ſome, but others affirm, that he was killed by ſome ſeditious ſoldiers.

Florian his brother, made himſelf Emperor as if he had had a right to ſucceed Tacitus; but he had to deal with a very powerful competitor in Probus, who was choſen by the greateſt part of the army, and whoſe merit greatly alarmed him. He knew that Probus was extremly beloved and eſteemed by the ſenate, the legions, and the people, and conſequently that it would be very difficult to maintain himſelf in a dignity, which a more worthy perſon than himſelf was in poſſeſſion of; ſo the raſh ſtep he had taken was followed by another ſtill more ſo, for he put himſelf to death by cauſing his veins to be opened.

Never did the troops make a choice that was ſo univerſally applauded, for the virtues of Probus eclipſed all thoſe of his predeceſſors; they had never ſeen ſo many good qualities united in the ſame perſon. The ſovereign authority only added to their luſtre, by making them appear in a more advantageous light.

For a long time it was not known that Probus ever had a wife, but Strada affirms, that he did marry one Julia Procla, † whoſe family and country, as well as her good and bad qualities were not mentioned. It is hard to ſay upon what grounds he builds his aſſertion, that there ever was an Empreſs of that name. We find, nevertheleſs, that he left children behind him, who ſettled themſelves

* Eutrop. Aurel, Vict. † Triſtan. Comment. Hiſtoric.

ſelves near Verona; but it no where appears, that his wife's name was Julia Procla: he had indeed a ſiſter called Claudia.

The reign of Probus was one continued ſeries of victories. When he had puniſhed the authors of Aurelian's death, he marched againſt the rebellious Gauls, and deſtroyed above ſeven hundred thouſand of thoſe Barbarians. He ſubdued the Illyrians and the Getes, both which nations he compelled to ſubmit to the Roman yoke. The eaſt was afterwards the theatre of his triumphs, where he took an infinite number of ſtrong towns, and defeated the Perſians, who had ſo often rebelled. He intended to have utterly extirpated them, when he was maſſacred by ſome ſoldiers at Sirmium.

Marcus Aurelius Carus was elected in his ſtead. He was of Narbonne in Languedoc, and poſſeſſed the ſame virtues for which Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus had been ſo much eſteemed.

Magnia Urbica, his wife, is known only by her medals, for hiſtory is quite ſilent as to her family, or where ſhe was born. It is indeed acknowledged, that there was an Empreſs called Magnia Urbica, for there are medals which give her the title of auguſt, and where ſhe is repreſented with her two children ſtanding before her. All the difficulty conſiſts in knowing what Emperor ſhe was the wife of, becauſe authors do not agree in that point; but, all circumſtances conſidered, it ſeems very plain that ſhe was the wife of Carus, and that the two children repreſented in the medals, were Carinus and Numerian, her ſons. Numerian had all his father's good qualities, but Carinus gave himſelf up to all manner of vices, ſo that the former was the delight of the army and the people, whilſt the other, by his monſtrous diſ-

ſolutions, became the object of their averſion. They all came to tragical deaths, for Carius was killed by thunder upon the banks of the Tigris near Cteſiphon. Numerian was aſſaſſinated in his litter by Aper his father in-law, who intended to ſeize the empire, and Carinus, after having ſeveral times defeated Diocleſian, whom the army had made Emperor, was killed by an officer whoſe wife he had debauched.

PRISCA,

PRISCA,
Wife of DIOCLESIAN.
VALERIA,
Wife of GALERIUS.
EUTROPIA,
Wife of HERCULES.
Of the Wife of MAXIMINUS.

FORTUNE reſpects neither rank nor grandeur, for the moſt exalted throne is no ſecurity againſt changes and revolutions; the Empreſſes Priſca and Valeria are proofs of this aſſertion. We ſhall ſee theſe two Princeſſes, wives of the maſters of the world, become wanderers and fugitives, reduced to all the misfortunes of a cruel deſtiny, and at laſt, terminate their lives by a violent death. A melancholy example of the inſtability and precarioufneſs of every thing in this world.

Nothing poſitive can be ſaid relating to the family or country of the Empreſs Priſca. The hiſtorians do not even agree about her name. Some call her Alexandra, others Serena, and others again, Eleuthera. It is not impoſſible, but ſhe might have all thoſe names, but it is certain that ſhe was alſo called Priſca, and is generally known by that name.

The church annaliſt ſpeaks of her by the name of Serena, and makes her a chriſtian. He will alſo have it, that ſhe died a quiet and natural death, and that the Empreſs Valeria, her daughter, did the ſame, ſoon after ſhe had married Galerus Maximian; which he infers from there being no farther mention made of her by ancient authors.

We

We cannot be of the ſame opinion with Baronius, nor the acts of Saint Suzanna, upon which he grounds his authority, becauſe it does not appear, that they are more to be credited than Lanctantius, who affirms the contrary, and who, not only lived at that time, but had an employment in Conſtantine's court.

Triſtan, in his hiſtorical commentaries, believes that Diocleſian's wife, whom he calls Serena, was daughter of Serenus, who had then one of the moſt important employments at Rome. Be that as it will, Priſca was a woman of ſuch extraordinary good qualities, that it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe ſhe had ſome knowledge of the chriſtian religion, and at leaſt practiſed it ſecretly. The prudence of her conduct, her humility upon the throne, and the great patience with which ſhe bore the different perſecutions ſhe met with, ſeem to be proofs of her having been well acquainted with thoſe divine laws.

Diocleſian, who acquitted himſelf with honour in all his military employs, had by Priſca his wife, a daughter called Valeria, whoſe beauty tho' very great, did not do her ſo much honour as her virtue, and the regularity of her life. She was educated by the Empreſs with all poſſible care and exactneſs, and inſtructed in the chriſtian religion. She followed very ſtrictly, the excellent example her mother gave her, and ſhewed, that the good leſſons that had been taught her, were not thrown away, but on the contrary produced excellent fruit.

After the death of Numerian, the Roman army, that had been led into Perſia by the Emperor Carus, choſe Diocleſian, who paſſed for one of the greateſt generals of his time, and was thought the moſt capable of governing and defending the empire. He was born in Dalmatia, of a very ob-

ſcure family. He was reckoned a great, but very wicked Prince; * and, in effect, had many vices mixed with extraordinary talents. He was of a very good ſize, had a grave and majeſtick air, but a rude and diſagreeable countenance, cloſe and reſerved, and a great maſter of diſſimulation; always forming important deſigns, and never executing them till after he had well weighed and conſidered the conſequences. He was generally victorious in war, and could never be accuſed of having failed by his own fault. He was ſo fertile in expedients, that in the moſt deſperate affairs, and ſuch as ſeemed to be paſt all remedy, ſome reſource or other was ſure to preſent itſelf to his ſuperior genius. He was nobly jealous of the glory of the empire, and ſo much encouraged arts and learning, that he deſerved the pompous title that was given him, of the reſtorer of the golden age. Before he was Emperor he uſed to ſay, that nothing was more difficult than to reign well, and he afterwards juſtified this maxim by his conduct; for tho' he had reſolved to imitate Marcus Antoninus, he fell infinitely ſhort of that model, and had ſcarce any of the virtues of that great Emperor. He was indeed ſo far maſter of his paſſions, that he knew how to curb and reſtrain them, but then this victory was owing to his policy, not to his virtue. He endeavoured to impoſe upon the publick and ſucceeded, for he was thought exempt from vice, becauſe he had the art of concealing it. He ſet no bounds to his pride, for he cauſed the ſame honours to be paid him that were given to the gods. His vanity ſo much appeared in the luxury and ſplendor of his apparel, that even his ſhoes were covered with jewels. He was alſo ſo avaricious, that in order to heap up money, he did not ſcruple to commit the moſt flagrant acts of

* Eutrop. Diocles.

of injuſtice, * but was cunning enough to throw the ſhame and odium of them upon his agents and inſtruments, who had proceeded by his order.

As ſoon as Diocleſian was proclaimed Emperor, the ſenate according to cuſtom, conferred upon Priſca the title of auguſt, which honour rather added to her humility than otherwiſe, and ſhewed that there are ſome few perſons in the world of ſuch exalted ſouls, as not to be influenced or corrupted by grandeur and high ſtations. It is not known whether Priſca accompanied her huſband when he went to Rome to have his election confirmed; but it is generally believed that ſhe was in the eaſt, when Diocleſian aſſociated in the empire his old friend Maximian, who took the ſurname of Hercules, and who indeed had ſerved very well under the preceding Emperors, but was of an obſcure extraction; this would have been no diſhonour to him, if he had not, at the ſame time, been plunged into all the vices of the worſt of tyrants. He was brutal in the higheſt degree, and ſo paſſionate that, in his fury, there was nothing ſo bad, but what he was capable of. Never were the taxes collected with ſo much rigour and violence as in his reign. He was covetous, unjuſt, without honour or conſcience, ſuborning falſe witneſſes againſt thoſe whoſe riches he was reſolved to be poſſeſſed of; beyond meaſure debauched, ſo that all lawful pleaſures were inſipid to him. He made no ſcruple to carry off by force, any young girls that he took a fancy to, even in ſight of their parents, whom he alſo compelled to be witneſſes of their diſhonour, ſo, as an hiſtorian has obſerved, † if his valour and military capacity rendered his marches terrible to his enemies, his incontinence made them not leſs ſo to women of virtue in thoſe places

* Lactan. de mortib. perſecut. † Lactan. de mortib. perſecut. c. 8.

places through which he was to paſs. As to his perſon it was as deformed as his mind, he was of a large ſize, but his features and countenance had ſomething ſo coarſe and ſavage, together with his black thick beard, that he could not be looked upon without horror; ſo it was not at all to be wondered at, if with that forbidding aſpect, he was not able to engage the affections of his wife Eutropia; on the contrary, it would have been more ſurpriſing, if that charming Syrian had not liſtened to the ſolicitations of a paſſionate and handſome lover, whoſe merit could not but place the imperfections of Hercules in a more diſadvantageous light.

Galeria-Valeria-Eutropia was not exempt from thoſe vices to which her nation is ſubject. Some authors ſay ſhe was nearly related to Eutropius, father of the Emperor Conſtantius *. She had a great ſhare of beauty, a chearful temper, an amorous complection, and was very fond of pleaſures and diverſions. She was married very young to a Syrian, whoſe name and family are not mentioned; from this marriage proceeded Theodora who we ſhall ſee upon the Throne: her huſband died ſoon after the birth of her daughter.

Eutropia's beauty loſt nothing of its force by her being in deep mourning, on the contrary it ſeemed to be rather heightened, for it is not probable that her countenance was of a piece with her dreſs. No body is more diſpoſed to receive comfort than a young amiable widow, whoſe vivacity and livelineſs is naturally no friend to ſerioufneſs and grief, and who is ſurrounded with a crowd of admirers, that are vying with each other who ſhall be the firſt to make her amends for her loſs. A lover full of life and ſprightlineſs, preſently obliterates the remembrance of a dead huſband,

* Julian. Cæſar. 1. Victor. Epit.

band, for people are ſoon weary of ſighing in vain after a ſhadow, and waſting their tears upon an object that can only amuſe their imagination. Eutropia paid to the memory of her huſband, what the faſhion and the rules of decency require, but did not think herſelf obliged to carry on the farce further than needs muſt; ſhe therefore looked out for a new conqueſt, and was ſo fortunate as to make a very illuſtrious one. Hercules, notwithſtanding his rough and unhewn diſpoſition, was far from being inſenſible of the power of beauty. He was captivated with her charms, and ſoon found means to let her know it.

Hercules, as we have obſerved, made a moſt diſagreeable appearance, and was more proper to inſpire fear than love; his mind was as uncultivated as his perſon, ſo that he was quite incapable of carrying on his amours in a polite way, but his fortune ſpoke for him; and the luſtre of the imperial purple made, at leaſt, as deep an impreſſion upon the heart of Eutropia, as the greateſt accompliſhments could have done. Sovereign authority is a ſort of veil, that effectually eclipſes the imperfections of whoever is inveſted with it. A lover who wears a crown is always well received, and the eyes of his miſtreſs, being fixed upon that ſplendid mark of his dignity, have not time to wander about to ſpy out the faults and deformities of his perſon; for which reaſon, though Eutropia had an infinite number of adorers, between whom and Hercules, there was no ſort of compariſon, as to real merit, yet he had the preference, as being moſt capable of gratifying her ambition.

Reaſons of ſtate might poſſibly weigh ſo far with the Emperor as to induce him to marry Eutropia, eſpecially, if it be true, that ſhe was related to Eutropius, and conſequently to Conſtantius, his ſon. The Emperors affected to marry into their own

own families, for we ſhall find, that when Conſtantius was aſſociated in the imperial dignity, he was obliged to divorce his wife Helena, to marry the daughter-in-law of Hercules; ſo that, Diocleſian having formed the deſign of placing Conſtantius upon the throne, who was every day doing important ſervices in the ſtate, it is very probable, that he engaged Hercules to marry Eutropia, in order to unite them, beforehand, to the Emperors by this alliance. However it was, this was the firſt time that two Empreſſes were ſeen reigning at the ſame time.

It is true that Fauſtina, wife of Marcus Aurelius, and Lucilla, wife of Lucius Verus, enjoyed at once the ſame dignity, as did afterwards, Julia, wife of Severus, and Plautilla, wife of Caracalla; but we have obſerved, that this laſt was not looked upon by Caracalla as his wife, becauſe Severus his father compelled him to marry her; ſhe lived at court only as daughter of Plautian, and not as wife to the Prince, nor had ſhe any ſort of credit or intereſt. As to Fauſtina and Lucilla, the mother always maintained a ſuperiority over the daughter; Lucilla could not be jealous of the honours conferred upon her mother, nor could Fauſtina envy her daughter for the reſpect that was paid her, ſince it was of her own procuring. But when Fauſtina died, and Commodus had married Criſpina, the caſe was altered. As ſhe was then Empreſs, ſhe claimed ſingly, all the honours that were uſed to be given to the Emperors wives, and which, ſhe ſaid, no body could pretend to but the reigning Empreſs; ſhe would not ſhare them with her ſiſter-in-law, who thought ſhe had a right to them as widow to an Emperor; and we have taken notice of the confuſions and quarrels that were occaſioned at court, on account of the perpetual jealouſies between theſe two Princeſſes.

Priſca

Priſca was not at all uneaſy upon this account, ſhe ſaw with great indifference, Hercules's wife ſeated with her upon the throne; but Eutropia was far from doing it the ſame honour, for Priſca being conducted by virtue and good ſenſe, and perhaps by the pure maxims of the chriſtian religion, was an ornament to her rank and her ſtation, and led ſuch a life as was exempt from all ſuſpicions and cenſures. Eutropia on the contrary, indulged herſelf in ſuch indecencies as were not at all to the advantage of her reputation. When ſhe firſt came to the empire, ſhe indeed acted cautiouſly, but the genius of her nation, added to her own natural temper, ſoon prevailed, and ſhe gave herſelf up to pleaſures; and, however the fury and reſentment of Hercules was to be dreaded, that did not hinder her from being extremely fond of a Syrian, who, by being polite and agreeable, found the ſecret of inſinuating himſelf into her good graces. A woman has a great deal more complaiſance for a man of her own country than another, and ſuch a one will always have a great advantage over a ſtranger. We cannot help leaning towards ſuch a perſon, for there is planted in every body's heart, a certain national partiality, that inclines us whether we will or not, to give him the preference. Eutropia had all this for the handſome Syrian, nor had ſhe virtue and reſolution enough to withſtand the ſolicitations of a lover that had every thing ſhe deſired, to recommend him.

Eutropia had been married ſome years to Hercules without having a child, which afflicted him very much * being extremely deſirous to have heirs. The Empreſs knew this, and it did not a little contribute to engage her in an amour, which anſwered

* Vita Conſtantin. Autor. Anoni.

anſwered her expectations, for ſhe became pregnant. This gave the Emperor all the ſatisfaction in the world, but if any thing was wanting to make it compleat, it was the fear of having a daughter; his deſires were however accompliſhed by Eutropia's being delivered of a ſon whom he called Maxentius. The credulous Emperor received this preſent with tranſports of joy, and cauſed this ſhameful production of his wife's libertiniſm, to be educated with all poſſible care and expence.

Some authors, who are more favourable to the Empreſs, * ſay, that Hercules paſſionately longed for a ſon to perpetuate his family, and ſeeing his wife with child, waited the event with great impatience, but that Eutropia being brought to bed of a girl, cunningly ſubſtituted a boy in its place, in order to ingratiate herſelf with her huſband, It muſt be alſo acknowledged, for the honour of the Empreſs, that there are hiſtorians who will have it, that Maxentius was really ſon to Hercules. Be it as it will, the Emperor who was more intereſted than any body in the birth of this child, looked upon it as his ſon, and accordingly, raiſed him afterwards to the Empire.

When he himſelf was adopted and aſſociated by Diocleſian, that Emperor did not leſs conſult his own intereſt, than the friendſhip he had for Hercules. He ſaw the provinces expoſed to the incurſions of Barbarians, and the uſurpation of tyrants, and as it was impoſſible for one Emperor to oppoſe ſo many enemies at once, he was very glad to be eaſed of part of the burden by chuſing a partner. Hercules had proved himſelf capable of anſwering his expectations, for having been ſent againſt Ælian and Amandus, who had put themſelves at the head of a band of robbers in Gaul,

* Eutrop.

Gaul, he diſſipated, in a very ſhort time, that dangerous faction; but at the ſame time demonſtrated his cruelty by inhumanly ordering the entire Theban legion to be maſſacred. It was compoſed of Chriſtians, and commanded by Maurice, an experienced general, who knew how to give Cæſar his right, but was not a man to prefer Cæſar to God, or to make his fortune at the expence of his religion. Hercules being to offer a ſacrifice to his gods to render them propitious to his deſigns, Maurice, as well as the officers and ſoldiers of his troop, not being able to prevail upon themſelves to join in this idolatry, ſtood aſide, that they might not be partakers in thoſe abominations. The Emperor, hurried on by his ſuperſtition to revenge his deſpiſed deities, thought he could not take a better method to appeaſe them, than by putting Maurice to death; and, in order to intimidate the ſoldiers, by puniſhing a great many, decimated them. Thoſe upon whom the lot fell, ſhewed ſo much joy in imitating their colonel, and ſuffered the puniſhment, to which they were condemned, with ſuch ſurpriſing intrepidity, that the tyrant, provoked at ſeeing himſelf overcome by theſe martyrs, put the whole legion to the ſword.

This act of violence was, as it were, the ſignal of the perſecution that was then kindled againſt the church, and which was one of the moſt terrible that had ever been known; for the oracle of Apollo having been conſulted, anſwered, that the juſt perſons of the earth hindered it from ſpeaking. It was not doubted, that by this was meant the Chriſtians, ſo it was reſolved that they ſhould be extirpated. Diocleſian, who was moſt ſuperſtitiouſly jealous of the honour of his gods, began with his own family, and the firſt act of the perſecution was committed in his palace.

The

The Empreſs Priſca having the greateſt veneration for the Chriſtian religion, had taken care to inſpire the princeſs Valeria, her daughter, with the ſame ſentiments, and, if they did not profeſs it publickly, they were at leaſt Chriſtians in their heart. It is difficult to imagine, that Diocleſian was quite ignorant of the inclination theſe two princeſſes had to Chriſtianity. Their neglect of the Roman deities, and their compaſſion for the perſecuted Chriſtians, might have made him ſuſpect that they paid their adoration elſewhere; nor can it be ſuppoſed, that they could keep ſo ſtrict a guard upon their whole behaviour as not to diſcover, by ſome means, the favourable opinion they entertained of a religion that the Emperor abhorred. His affection for his wife and daughter had made him often heſitate what to do, between that and the extraordinary zeal he had for his gods, and had frequently induced him to delay the execution of what the heathen prieſts had aſſured him was his duty to do, rather than give offence to perſons he ſo tenderly loved. But as ſoon as the oracle had rouſed his ſuperſtition, by appearing contrary to the Chriſtians, he formed the deſign of aboliſhing Chriſtianity entirely, and of cauſing his gods to be univerſally worſhipped, eſpecially Jupiter and Hercules; and in order the better to pay his court to them, he imagined, that he ought to compliment them, in the firſt place, with the lives of the chief perſons in the empire.

Diocleſian's conduct in this affair ſeems to have been extreamly imprudent, and not of a piece with his behaviour in other reſpects; for he ſeldom did any thing of conſequence without its being well weighed and conſidered. It cannot but be acknowledged, that he was very fond of his only daughter, as well as his Empreſs, who was ſo deſerving of his eſteem and affection; but, by commanding

commanding them to aſſiſt at his ſacrifice, he expoſed himſelf to the cruel neceſſity of either permitting his gods to be deſpiſed by the Princeſſes refuſing to offer incenſe to thoſe fabulous divinities, or elſe of being compelled to expiate the contempt at the expence of thoſe lives which were ſo valuable to him.

This diſagreeable alternative did not, however, change his reſolution, for the unbounded reſpect he had for his gods prevailed; he was of opinion, that nothing ought to be put in competition with that, and thought his family ſhould be the firſt to ſhew an example of their ſubmiſſion to his orders, and of their zeal for the tutelary gods of the republick.

This might have been a happy conjuncture for the Princeſſes, who were thereby furniſhed with a fair opportunity of illuſtrating their names, and doing honour to their faith, by refuſing to pay, to falſe deities, that worſhip and adoration which they knew belonged only to the true God; but whether they were terrified at the threats of the Emperor, whoſe fury was never ſo dreadful as when he was to revenge any ſlight put upon his gods; or whether it was that the Princeſſes were not ſufficiently inſtructed in the principles of their religion, which commands us to confeſs its divine Author, even in the midſt of tortures, before the potentates and tyrants of the earth, and not to fear thoſe who can only kill the body; whatever was the reaſon, they had not reſolution enough to overcome the powerful temptation, but were ſo weak as to conform to the command of Diocleſian, and offer, externally, the ſacrifice which their hearts condemned them for. They preferred, to their ſalvation, a life that they ſeemed to have preſerved only to paſs it in grief and bitterneſs; for, by avoiding the preſent evil, they drew upon themſelves

themſelves a worſe and more laſting one. The bad example of the two Princeſſes had indeed but too many imitators, but there were a great number of good Chriſtians, upon whom it made no bad impreſſion, and who chearfully ſealed their faith with their blood. Even the Emperor's palace ſerved as a theatre to the triumph of ſome of his officers, who bore, with a ſerene countenance, and ſuch intrepidity as was not to be ſhaken, either by threats or promiſes, the utmoſt efforts of his rage; Sebaſtian eſpecially, a captain of the Prætorian guards, and diſtinguiſhed by his extraordinary merit, made a generous confeſſion of his faith in preſence of the whole court, and confounded his perſecutors by ſuffering martyrdom, not only with courage and patience, but with joy and pleaſure.

The Emperors did not, however, reap from this cruelty the advantage they expected, nor were they able to procure peace and tranquillity to the empire, by appeaſing the gods with torrents of blood, as they flattered themſelves. The Chriſtians were expoſed to all the miſeries and torments that the malice of men or devils could invent, but that did not hinder new revolts from creating new wars in all the provinces, ſo that the ſovereign authority was never in ſo much danger of being totally overthrown. Carauſus rebelled in England, where he made himſelf an abſolute tyrant. The Perſians, conducted by Narſes their king, made irruptions all over the Eaſt. Egypt had choſen a new maſter in the perſon of Achilles, who had cauſed himſelf to be proclaimed Emperor at Alexandria; and even Italy groaned under the unlimited and independent power that Julian had aſſumed; ſo that it looked as if all theſe enemies had aroſe, by common conſent, againſt the empire, in order to divide it amongſt them.

Dioclefian

Diocleſian and Hercules, ſeeing ſo much work upon their hands, reſolved to aſſociate other colegues that ſhould be as much intereſted to defend the empire as themſelves. They therefore gave the dignity of Cæſar to Galerius and Conſtantius, generals that were very capable of humbling the rebels, and protecting the provinces they ſhould be intruſted with. The former was the ſon of a peaſant of Illyria. Romula, his mother, had an implacable hatred to the Chriſtians, which ſhe took care to infuſe into her ſon, and whoſe poiſonous leven fermented but too much in his heart. He had, in his youth, been brought up a ſhepherd, but afterwards took arms, in which profeſſion he became very ſkilful, and had good ſucceſs. However, neither the air of the army, nor his reſiding ſo long at court, were able to rub off the ruſt he had contracted, ſo that, in the moſt exalted ſtations, he ſtill retained his former unpoliteneſs. To ſay the truth, he was a good officer, but (that excepted) he had not one commendable quality. He had ſomething dark and gloomy in his countenance, that ſufficiently ſhewed the ſourneſs of his mind; and his loud, harſh voice, wild look, and continual frown, gave every body an averſion to his perſon. He had the vices of the worſt of the Emperors, and indulged them with the utmoſt brutality. As he was cruel and inflexible, he could never be prevailed upon to temper juſtice with mercy, a virtue ſo neceſſary to princes. His vanity ſurpaſſed that of the Emperors, who were moſt accuſed of it; for, notwithſtanding his baſe extraction, he carried his pride ſo far, that, not content with being above other men in point of rank, he alſo claimed a ſuperiority with reſpect to his family, and his original; giving out, that he was the ſon of Mars, who he ſaid, in the form of a dragon, had carnal know-

ledge of his mother; being very willing to diſhonour her by ſo monſtrous a junction, rather than not be thought of an illuſtrious deſcent. Beſides all this, he was ſo covetous, that, in order to ſatisfy his inſatiable avarice, he made all the provinces groan under the intolerable burden of his extortions.

Flavius Conſtantius was ſon of Eutropius, one of the greateſt lords of Dardania, and of Claudia, daughter of Criſpus, brother to the Emperor Claudius the Goth, and he honoured his nobility by the greateſt virtues, eſpecially ſweetneſs of temper, affability, and the moſt engaging behaviour. He never put into his coffers the riches of the provinces; for it was a maxim of his, that it was much better the gold ſhould circulate among the people, than be treaſured up by the prince. He had acquired ſo great a reputation in the army, that Carus judged him worthy of the Empire. Before the title of Cæſar was conferred on him, he married Helena, but he was forced to divorce her, conformable to the will of Hercules and Dioclesian, who obliged him to marry Theodora, daughter of Eutropia.

About this time, Maximian Galerius married the princeſs Valeria; and it is very probable, that when Dioclesian gave her to him, he did not much conſult the inclinations of his daughter; for it is certain, that Galerius had none of the qualifications that were neceſſary to make him agreeable to ſo accompliſhed a lady. In his firſt wife's time he had led a moſt diſſolute life, nor were matters much better after his marriage with Valeria, for he had a favourite miſtreſs that he preferred infinitely to her. It is true, that the princeſs did not take this affront much to heart; for her virtue and good diſpoſitions made her not ſuſceptible of jealouſy. She did not only ſubmit

to

to his ill treatment without complaining, but even ſhewed him marks of eſteem and affection, of which he was by no means worthy; for, finding that ſhe had no children, ſhe adopted Candidian her huſband's natural ſon.

By the creation of theſe new Cæſars, there were four Empreſſes upon the throne. In all appearance Priſca, who was the oldeſt of them, preſerved a kind of ſuperiority over the reſt. The other Emperors owed their fortunes to Diocleſian, and gratitude required that their Empreſſes ſhould yield the precedence to the wife of their benefactor. They were not, however, much expoſed to the jealouſy and diſputes that are generally occaſioned by an equality of rank and condition; for the Emperors, having divided the provinces, that each might protect his own part againſt the barbarians and tyrants, the Empreſſes accompanied their huſbands, and each, in her own diviſion, enjoyed all the honours that are annexed to the ſupreme authority.

Galerius marched againſt the Perſians who had already conquered Meſopotamia. His firſt campaign was not ſucceſsful, for he was defeated by the Barbarians. Diocleſian heard this news with great vexation; he was ſo out of humour with his ſon-in-law, and gave him ſo cold a reception *, that he permitted Galerius to follow his litter on foot for half an hour, though he was cloathed in the Imperial purple, the luſtre of which only ſerved to augment his confuſion. This misfortune did not, however, diſcourage Galerius, for he raiſed another powerful army, and attacked the Perſians again. The Empreſs Valeria accompanied him in this expedition, and ſhared with him the fatigue and the honour of it; ſhe even greatly

* Ammian. Marcel. lib. 14. Eutrop.

facilitated the victory he obtained over the enemy; for as Diocleſian * was very fond of his daughter, ſhe employed all her intereſt with him, to procure every thing that was neceſſary to enable Galerius to carry on the war with ſucceſs, and ſo won the hearts of the ſoldiers by her liberality, that they were all ready to lay down their lives to re-eſtabliſh the reputation of the Roman arms. By theſe means, Galerius defeated the Perſians in Armenia, and Narſes their king was put to flight, abandoning to the conqueror his queen, ſiſters, children and treaſure, together with his camp and equipage. The Romans retook all that they had loſt the year before; and if Galerius had been at liberty to have puſhed his good fortune as he firſt intended, he would have abſolutely ruined the Perſian empire. But Diocleſian's jealouſy was a happy reſource for the Barbarians: he ſaw, with envy, the laurels with which Galerius was covered, and recalled him, pretending that it was high time for him to take ſome repoſe after his labours, and enjoy the honour of the triumph that was preparing for him.

Conſtantius, in the mean time, met with the like viciſſitudes of fortune in Gaul; he was firſt ſurpriſed and beaten by the enemy, but afterwards defeated them near Langres. Hercules ſubdued the Africans; and Diocleſian, having humbled the tyrant Achilles, made himſelf maſter of all Egypt; ſo that the four Emperors had the honour of re-eſtabliſhing the affairs of the republick. The ſenate decreed them a triumph, and Diocleſian, accompanied by Hercules, went to Rome to reap the fruits of his victories. The empreſs Eutropia undertook the journey with her huſband, though ſhe was big with child. She had never been at Rome,

* Triſtan. Comment. Hiſtor.

Rome, and paſſionately longed to ſee the capital of the world. She was there brought to bed of a daughter, which was named Fauſta, which was a new ſubject of joy to the town, and added very much to the ſplendor and magnificence of the triumph. It was celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and all the orders ſtrove to out-do each other, by the moſt flattering harangues upon this occaſion. The Empreſs Valeria had the ſatisfaction of partaking with her huſband in all theſe honours; for the ſenate, who were very aſſiduous in obtaining the good graces of Diocleſian, for whom the other Cæſars had the greateſt deference and reſpect, did not think they could pay their court to him more effectually, than by conferring upon his only daughter the honours that had been granted to the preceding Empreſſes, eſpecially ſince ſhe was ſo deſerving of them. Beſides the ſuperb title of mother of the armies, with which none but the moſt illuſtrious of the Empreſſes had been dignified, they decreed her a crown of laurel, a glorious and particular privilege, that had never before been given to any woman, and which was in conſideration of her having had ſo large a ſhare in, and ſo much contributed to her huſband's military exploits. They did not ſtop there; for, in order to immortalize her name and memory, they gave the name of Valeria to that part of Pannonia, which is between the Drave and the Danube *. Thus liberal of her careſſes was fortune to the princeſs, little foretelling the bitter afflictions that were ſoon to overtake her.

Diocleſian, after the example of other Emperors, entertained the people with ſhews and diverſions, but in ſo ſtingy a way, that, inſtead of gaining their eſteem and affection, it afforded am-

* Ammian. lib. 19.

ple matter for raillery and ridicule; at which he was ſo affronted, that he left Rome, and went to Ravenna in ſuch bad weather, that he contracted a diſorder, which emaciated his body, and ſo debilitated his mind, that he was out of his ſenſes for a conſiderable time. This accident made his collegues loſe a great deal of the reſpect they had hitherto ſhewn him; and Galerius, his ſon-in-law, was the firſt that failed in that point. For a great while paſt, the ſubmiſſion that he had been forced to pay to Diocleſian, went much againſt the grain with him. His late victory had ſo puffed him up, that he imagined himſelf the only perſon capable of governing, and looked upon Diocleſian and Hercules as old worn-out men. He flattered himſelf that it would not be impoſſible for him to perſuade them to quit the empire, and then thought he could eaſily manage Conſtantius. He omitted nothing that he ſuppoſed neceſſary to bring this project to bear, but did not, at firſt, find them ſo much inclined to gratify him as he could wiſh. People are not ſo very ready to condemn themſelves to a private life, after having taſted the ſweets of power and ſovereignty; nor is it ſo eaſy for thoſe to ſubmit to a voluntary obedience, that have been uſed to command. The two Emperors wreſtled a long time againſt all the efforts of Galerius, but were at laſt ſo intimidated by his threatening letters, that, to avoid a civil war, they were neceſſitated to diveſt themſelves of their dignity.

Diocleſian did it with a great deal of ſolemnity. He aſſembled, at Nicomedia, all the officers of his army, and the grandees of his court, and told them, with tears in his eyes, that his infirmities would not permit him to ſupport the fatigues of war any longer; for which reaſon he was determined

mined to give up his ſhare of the government to his collegues, who had all talents that were requiſite for ſo important a truſt, and who were in the prime of life: he added, that Hercules had formed the ſame deſign. After a very moving ſpeech he quitted the purple, took the equipage of a private perſon, and retired to Salona, a town in Dalmatia. Hercules went through the ſame ceremony at Milan, and, no doubt, with the ſame regret: after which, he went to Rome in his private capacity. Diocleſian had a mind that Conſtantine, (ſon of Conſtantius) and Maxentius, who paſſed for the ſon of Hercules, ſhould be created Cæſars; but Galerius, who intended to make himſelf ſole Emperor, oppoſed it. He was, nevertheleſs, obliged to accept of thoſe two Princes for his collegues; for, when Conſtantius was dying at York, he named Conſtantine for his ſucceſſor; and Maxentius took upon himſelf that dignity, of his own authority, cauſing himſelf to be proclaimed Emperor.

By the abdication of Diocleſian and Hercules, the empreſſes Priſca and Eutropia ſaw themſelves deprived of their dignity. It is more than probable, that they did not quit it with a very good grace; for ladies do not generally ſubmit to a degradation without its coſting them ſome ſighs. Be that as it may, it appears, that it was not long before Hercules repented of the ſtep he had taken; for being ſoon weary of a private life, he reaſſumed the marks of ſovereign authority, and again increaſed the number of Cæſars. He would fain have prevailed upon Diocleſian to imitate him, and ſent a nobleman of his court to ſolicit him to it, but Diocleſian very prudently rejected the propoſal. He declared to the envoy, that he infinitely preferred the tranquillity of his retreat

to the hurry and tumult of a court, and in his letter he ſays, *I wiſh that you were at Salona to ſee my garden, and the herbs that I have planted with my own hands, you need not then endeavour to entice me away from my agreeable retirement, to imbroil myſelf afreſh in affairs of ſtate.*

Of all the rivals and competitors that Galerius had, Maxentius ſeemed to him to be the moſt formidable. This Prince was full of ambitious deſigns, capable of forming vaſt projects, and believing himſelf ſon of Hercules, thought he had a right to pretend to the Empire. As he did not receive his authority from any body, but had taken it of himſelf, Galerius treated him as an uſurper, and ſent Severus with an army againſt him, who having attacked Maxentius, was put to flight, and forced to take ſhelter at Ravenna. Hercules ordered him to be executed, though he had promiſed to ſave his life.

This piece of treachery furniſhed Galerius with a pretence to declare war againſt Hercules; and in order to be the better able to carry it on with ſucceſs, he aſſociated Licinius. Hercules being alarmed at the number of his enemies, endeavoured to procure the aſſiſtance of Conſtantine, and to that end gave him his daughter Fauſta in marriage: notwithſtanding this ſtrict alliance, he however ſoon formed very black deſigns againſt the life of his ſon-in-law. But he was the dupe of his own artifices; for Conſtantine having diſcovered the miſchief that was hatching againſt him, drove Hercules to ſuch a pitch of deſpair, that he killed himſelf. Galerius did not long ſurvive him, but terminated, by a ſhameful death, a life which his cruelty and incontinence had made deteſtable. He was ſtruck with a horrible diſeaſe *, in the moſt ſenſible parts of his body; being

* Lactan. de mortib. perſecut.

being devoured alive by worms; and ſuch a ſtench proceeded from him, as was offenſive even to thoſe who were without-ſide the palace.

The inexpreſſible noxiouſneſs of this dreadful diſtemper, did not hinder the empreſs Valeria from attending her huſband with all the care and affection that could have been expected from a woman that had met with the beſt treatment in the world, and giving ſuch proofs of her dutifulneſs, as he was in no ſort deſerving of. But the terrible and uncommon plague that he was afflicted with, having obſtinately reſiſted all the means that could be thought of for his recovery, he knew that he had nothing to expect but a miſerable death. Then it was that he began to make diſmal reflections upon his cruelty to the Chriſtians, and iſſued an edict to put a ſtop to the perſecution he had raiſed againſt thoſe poor innocent people, whoſe blood cried aloud for vengeance. This ſhewed that the greateſt enemies of Chriſtianity could not but be ſenſible that they were acting contrary to all religion, and the common ſentiments of humanity, when they proceeded with ſo much rage and inveteracy againſt the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. At laſt, after having recommended his wife, and Candidian his natural ſon, to Licinius, he died without being regretted.

As ſoon as Maximinus was informed of his death, he ſet out for the Eaſt, to take poſſeſſion of thoſe provinces that had fallen to the lot of his uncle. But Licinius would not allow of his pretentions; and this diſpute obliging them to have recourſe to arms, ſo they were determined to decide it by a battle; means were, however, found to adjuſt the difference, and then they mutually ſwore to live in friendſhip with each other. As the territories of Galerius had been the ſubject of

their quarrel, Valeria, who was reſolved to live quietly, and free from noiſe and tumults, yielded to Maximinus every thing that ſhe had a right to belonging to her huſband; but Maximinus, with great politeneſs, declined it, and inſiſted upon her enjoying the riches that Galerius had left her. He gave the moſt generous tokens of a ſincere friendſhip and eſteem, and even eagerly embraced every opportunity of contributing to her pleaſure and ſatisfaction.

There being now no rancour or animoſity between Licinius and Maximinus, they both retired to their reſpective provinces; but before they ſeparated, they each of them offered to Valeria a revenue ſuitable to her rank. She heſitated for a long time about what was beſt for her to do. She knew that Diocleſian, her father, drew near his end; and that, after his death, neither Salona nor Nicomedia could be a place of ſafety for her; ſhe therefore thought it moſt adviſable to paſs the remainder of her days either with Licinius or Maximinus, who, being beholden to her late huſband for their fortunes, could not, in honour and gratitude, but have a particular regard for his widow; ſo all the difficulty lay in the choice ſhe ſhould make. On the one hand, ſhe recollected that her huſband had very warmly recommended her to Licinius, which looked as if he had thereby declared his intention; but, on the other hand, ſhe was not ignorant that Licinius had a very bad character, and was even afraid, that as ſhe was not married, he might make her ſome diſagreeable propoſals that ſhould be directly contrary to the reſolution ſhe had taken of paſſing the reſt of her life in widowhood. Theſe reaſons determined her to put herſelf under the protection of Maximinus, who, being nephew to Gale-

rius, would be moſt likely to treat, with kindneſs and affection, a perſon who had been wife to his uncle and benefactor.

The Empreſs Priſca was ſo exceſſively fond of her daughter, that ſhe could not bear the thoughts of ſeparating from her. Beſides ſhe hoped to be more at liberty to practiſe the chriſtian religion with Maximinus than elſewhere; for tho' ſhe knew him to be no friend to chriſtianity in general, yet ſhe could not ſuppoſe that ſhe or her daughter were to be ſubject to the rigour of whatever edicts he might iſſue againſt it. Diocleſian did not think proper to oppoſe the Princeſſes deſign, for he had, for a long time paſt, been ſo uſed to ſolitude, that he gave himſelf very little trouble about what was going on; his garden at Salona was all he minded, and indeed, the diſorders he was ſubject to, would not permit him to employ himſelf in any thing elſe. So he willingly conſented to the departure of his wife and daughter. They were accompanied by Candidian, natural ſon to Galerius, and Prince Severian, ſon of the Emperor Severus.

Theſe two Princeſſes, by their virtue, beauty, and merit, were the greateſt ornaments of the court. Priſca eſpecially, was infinitely eſteemed for the prudence of her conduct; ſhe never meddled with any ſtate affairs, but paſſed her time in the performance of thoſe duties which the religion ſhe ſecretly practiſed, inſpired her with. Valeria was yet in the height of her beauty, which was in a great meaſure, owing to her having no children; her modeſty ſet off her charms, and the mourning habit which ſhe never quitted, made her more amiable inſtead of having a contrary effect.

Maximinus

Maximinus at firſt, behaved with the greateſt politeneſs and civility to the two Princeſſes. He had for Priſca, all the deference and reſpect that was due to her age and quality, and treated Valeria as a kind and dutiful ſon would do a good mother. The Princeſſes thought themſelves ſo happy, that it was not in the power of any thing to add to their felicity, congratulated each other upon their good fortune in having preferred Maximinus to Licinius, and were far from regretting their former condition. As they were entirely their own miſtreſſes, and at liberty to do whatever they pleaſed, they imagined that nothing could interrupt their tranquillity. The extreme complaiſance of the Emperor, and his obliging officiouſneſs to procure them all poſſible ſatisfaction, made them forget all that had been diſagreeable to them in their paſt life; but they little knew that this calm was ſo ſoon to be ſucceeded by a ſtorm, and this ſtate of peace and ſerenity by a cruel perſecution.

The Empreſs Valeria was herſelf the innocent occaſion of it; her beauty kindled in the heart of Maximinus, a flame that was not to be reſiſted, ſo that in effect, he was rather her ſlave than her protector; and as he had not been accuſtomed to curb his paſſions, he gave himſelf up to the violence of his love, without conſidering whether it was lawful or not. Neither the reſpect he owed to the memory of his uncle, nor the ſtrict virtue of Valeria, (which did not permit him to flatter himſelf with the leaſt hopes of ſucceſs) were of force enough to reſtrain him. He had an unlimited power, which ſeldom permits thoſe who are inveſted with it, to act according to reaſon or religion: ſome people are apt to think every thing lawful that is poſſible.

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It is certain that Valeria could not make a more dangerous conqueſt, for in Maximinus, were united all the vices that can be imagined: he had an extream averſion to the chriſtian religion, and an inexhauſtible fund of brutality, that made him dreadful to all the world; as he paſſed moſt of his time in drinking to exceſs, and conſequently was never maſter of his reaſon, it cannot be wondered at, that he ſhould fall into all other ſorts of irregularities and debaucheries; particularly his incontinence was carried to ſuch a pitch, that there was no ſecurity againſt it. As he was not a man to put in practice the virtue of ſelf-denial, he thought of nothing but how to gratify thoſe deſires which were more and more excited by the beauty of Valeria; and not having the patience to wait till the expiration of her mourning, he was reſolved to let her know it without further loſs of time. He began with the uſual complaiſance, and ſtudying what could be moſt agreeable to her; but Valeria taking all this for an effect of his politeneſs, and far from imagining that it was any thing more than bare civility, behaved in ſuch a manner as gave the Emperor plainly to underſtand that ſhe did not ſee into his deſigns; it was therefore neceſſary for him to come to a clearer explanation. He did not, however, chuſe to do it himſelf, for the firſt ſteps in love are generally the moſt troubleſome, and there are few men, however they may abound in wit and aſſurance, but what are embarraſſed upon ſuch an occaſion, eſpecially when the declaration is to be made to a perſon that it is unlawful for them to addreſs in that language. Maximinus, who felt this ſort of uneaſineſs, and being well acquainted with Valeria's auſterity and reſervedneſs, gave this commiſſion to one of his favourites, charging him to acquaint the

the Princeſs with the impreſſion her charms had made on him; and, that he might be the more favourably heard, Maximinus gave him orders to declare, that he had no other intention than to raiſe her to the throne, by marrying her after divorcing his wife.

Valeria was thunderſtruck at this propoſal, and immediately repreſented to herſelf all the miſeries that this fatal paſſion would involve her in. All the evils that the moſt cruel and moſt libidinous of mankind could bring upon her, crowded into her imagination. She thought herſelf little obliged to her beauty that had laid ſuch a ſnare for her, and plunged her into ſuch deep diſtreſs. Her inclination as well as her religion, forbad her to think of it without horror.

The negotiator was not wanting to exaggerate the violence and ſincerity of the Emperor's love, and the great advantages ſhe would reap by this match. She acknowledged herſelf to be infinitely obliged to the Emperor for the honour he did her, * but, in her preſent condition, it did not become her to liſten to any propoſals of that nature; that the aſhes of Galerius were ſcarce cold, and that the mourning which ſhe wore, reminded her every moment of her huſband's death. Beſides which, the laws of decency would not permit her to except of the Emperor's offer, for that ſhe could look upon him in no other light than as the ſon of Galerius, ſince he had been adopted by him. That it would be unpardonable in her to do the wife of Maximinus ſo great an injury as to deprive her of her huſband's affection; and, in ſhort, that it would be the height of injuſtice, if he ſhould divorce his wife, who was ſo worthy of his eſteem, and did by do means deſerve ſuch treatment.

* Lactan. de Mortib. perſec.

ment, She added, that it would be very unſeemly for a perſon of her rank to marry a ſecond huſband, and tarniſh her widowhood by a new engagement.

The favourite did not fail to oppoſe all theſe reaſons, but in vain; for the Princeſs proteſted that ſhe had made a ſolemn reſolution againſt ever marrying again, and by that, cut off all hopes of her being prevailed upon to alter her mind, whatever brilliant and flattering promiſes might be made her. This anſwer, ſo little favourable to Maximinus's hopes, provoked him beyond meaſure, and changed his love into hatred. He reſolved that Valeria ſhould fear him at leaſt, ſince ſhe could not be brought to love him; and as it is uſual for tyrants to paſs from one extream to another, ſo he became her moſt cruel proſecutor. At firſt he was determined to make her feel all the weight of his reſentment, but ſome ſmall remains of regard for Diocleſian, induced him to delay, for a little time, the gratification of his vengeance, which nevertheleſs, only fell the heavier upon her afterwards. He turned her brutally out of her palace, ſeized all her effects, deprived her of her domeſticks, and gave her all the mortifications he could poſſibly invent.

The Empreſs Priſca being involved in the ſame perſecution, ſhared with her daughter in all theſe afflictions, and met with the ſame treatment. The Princeſſes ſubmitted to this inhuman uſage with great courage and reſolution, as to what regarded themſelves; but what grieved them moſt, was the affronts that were put upon many ladies of their retinue, whom they honoured with their friendſhip and eſteem. Maximinus endeavoured to blacken their reputations, after having in vain attempted to corrupt them. This monſter of impurity,

purity, againſt whoſe attacks no woman could be ſafe, having found in theſe ladies, a chaſtity that was proof againſt all his ſolicitations, thought he could not be more effectually revenged, than by accuſing them of the very crime he would have perſuaded them to commit, knowing that a woman of virtue, is more ſenſible of the loſs of her honour than her life.

An infamous Jew was thought a proper tool to carry on this piece of work. He was a notorious villain, that had been convicted of the greateſt crimes; but Maximinus promiſed him his pardon upon condition, that he would accuſe theſe ladies before Eratineus, governor of Nicéa, where the court then was. The Emperor, who knew that this magiſtrate was fit for his purpoſe, had made him judge of the cauſe. Eratineus was of a cruel arbitrary diſpoſition, ſevere againſt thoſe that he had a mind to deſtroy, however innocent they might be, and indulgent to ſuch offenders as he intended to ſkreen from puniſhment, let them be never ſo guilty. He had a corrupt and mercenary ſoul, and was anxious about nothing ſo much as how to make his fortune, without troubling himſelf about the means.

This miſerable wretch, who was rejoiced at having ſo fair an opportunity of exempting himſelf from the chaſtiſement he had deſerved upon ſuch eaſy terms, greedily embraced the offer, and accuſed the ladies of the moſt horrible proſtitutions. Amongſt theſe illuſtrious criminals, there were two ſenators wives that were nearly related to the Empreſs Priſca, and another, whoſe daughter was one of the veſtal virgins, and for whom Valeria had a particular kindneſs. Theſe ladies were all extremely handſome, and their beauty was adorned with ſuch virtue as had enabled them to with-

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ſtand all the ardent purſuits of Maximinus, which was in reality, the crime they were guilty of.

The accuſation of this Jew, tho' ſupported by no proofs, was a ſufficient reaſon for the condemnation of the ladies. So unjuſt a ſentence made every body tremble, for at this rate of proceeding none could be ſecure. The people clamoured exceedingly againſt it, and a thouſand voices were heard in the croud, extolling the virtue and merit of the pretended criminals. This did not, however, ſave them, for as it was pre-determined that they ſhould die martyrs to their chaſtity, they were accordingly executed without the town; and the iniquitous judge was not aſhamed to feaſt his eyes with this tragical ſpectacle.

But, to his great confuſion as well as the Emperor's it was not long before the wickedneſs of this action was diſcovered; for the Jew, having committed ſome new crime, for which he was condemned to death, confeſſed the whole affair.

Maximinus's cruelty did not ſtop there, for he condemned the two Princeſſes to a rigorous baniſhment, and committed them to the charge of the moſt pitileſs and hard hearted wretches that could be procured, who had orders to treat them with the utmoſt inhumanity. They were ſent into the deſerts of Syria, where they were reduced to the greateſt miſery. It was a melancholy ſight to ſee two of the moſt illuſtrious perſons in the univerſe, who had been always uſed to be treated with the greateſt reſpect and diſtinction, dragged from town to town like the vileſt offenders, and become the objects of compaſſion of thoſe who had reaſon to envy their former ſplendour.

In all the places they paſſed through, great multitudes flocked about them; ſome to gaze and gratify their curioſity, and others to be witneſſes of the

the ſtrange viciſſitudes of fortune, which frequently hurls people down from the higheſt pinacle of grandeur to the loweſt degree of wretchedneſs.

Valeria however, found means to inform her father of all their afflictions, and Diocleſian felt upon this occaſion, all that a father and a huſband can ſuffer on account of the misfortunes inflicted upon a wife and a daughter. He ſent a perſon of quality, belonging to his court, to Maximinus to demand the Empreſſes; but he, looking upon Diocleſian as upon a poor Hermit that was not to be regarded, deſpiſed the meſſage.

Diocleſian having diveſted himſelf of all authority, and not being in a condition to command, had no other method to procure redreſs than that of negociating; he therefore deputed one of his near relations, who had a conſiderable rank in the army, to obtain, if poſſible, what he had requeſted of Maximinus. The ambaſſador repreſented to him, that both Galerius his uncle, and he himſelf had been made Emperor by Diocleſian's means, and though he had, through an extraordinary degree of modeſty, reſigned the empire, he had been always treated with the reſpect that was due to him. He added, that nothing could be more reaſonable than for a father and huſband to demand his daughter and wife. But all theſe arguments and remonſtrances were to no purpoſe, for they only ſerved to increaſe Maximinus's cruelty. Inſtead of giving the Empreſſes their liberty, he augmented the rigour of their exile. This put Diocleſian beyond all patience; his ſolitude had not ſo entirely broke his ſpirit, as to render him inſenſible of this injurious uſage; on the contrary, it made ſo deep an impreſſion on him, that he was uneaſy of his life; and a new vexation that befel him, made him reſolve to deſtroy himſelf.

Licinius

Licinius and Conſtantine, in order to cement the peace and friendſhip that was between them, entered into a ſtrict aliance. Conſtantine married his ſiſter Conſtantia to Licinius, and the nuptials were celebrated at Milan. Diocleſian was invited to be preſent at the ceremony, but as he had, upon his abdication, renounced all pleaſures and diverſions, and particularly at this time, when he was overwhelmed with grief on account of the misfortunes of his familly, he returned thanks to the two Cæſars* for the honour they did him, but deſired, for the fore-mentioned reaſons, and on account of his age and infirmities, to be excuſed.

This refuſal was taken very ill by Conſtantine and Licinius, and looked upon as a contempt; in conſequence of which they wrote him ſuch threatning letters, and ſo terrified the old Emperor, that he killed himſelf. Maximinus did not long ſurvive him, for having quarrelled with Licinius and declared war againſt him, the two armies met near Adrianople. Maximinus addreſſed himſelf † to his gods, and promiſed to extirpate the chriſtians intirely, if they would grant him the victory; but Licinius, as is credibly reported, dreamt that if he invoked the God of the chriſtians he would infallibly conquer. However that was, Maximinus was defeated, and obliged to flee with ſuch precipitation that he travelled ſixty leagues in twenty four hours, till he got into Cappadocia, but knowing that he was purſued, he poiſoned himſelf.

It was hoped that the death of Maximinus would put an end to the ſufferings of Priſca and Valeria, and, in effect, Licinius had nothing to apprehend from two Empreſſes, who enjoyed no more than the

* Eutrop. † Lactan. de Mortib. perſecu.

the ſhadow of their former dignity; for, as there were no footſteps remaining of their paſt grandeur, they could not be objects of jealouſy to the reigning Empreſſes. Beſides, they were neither ambitious enough to cabal, nor powerful enough to carry into execution any project, that might be formed for their advantage. They thought of nothing but how to paſs in tranquillity, the remainder of a life that Maximinus had imbittered with ſorrow and affliction. Fortune ſeemed to give them ſome rays of hope, that they might, ſome time or other, ſee better days; for as ſoon as Maximinus was dead, Candidian, Gallerius's natural and adopted ſon, went to pay his reſpects to Licinius at Nicomedia, was received with civility, and great honour and reſpect was paid him by order of the Emperor. Valeria, who had the intereſts of Candidian much at heart, heard with great joy of the kind reception that Licinius had given him, and from thence conceived good hopes of ſeeing her fortune re-eſtabliſhed. Full of theſe flattering ideas, ſhe took a reſolution to go ſecretly to Nicomedia, that ſhe might be a witneſs of the figure Candidian made at court; ſhe therefore diſguiſed herſelf, went thither, and had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him receive all the reſpect and honour that was due to his birth. Severian, being encouraged by this to try his fortune, went alſo to Nicomedia, and was treated in ſuch a manner, as gave him very good expectations. In effect, Licinius, looking upon Severian as the ſon of his ancient collegue, gave him ſuch diſtinguiſhing marks of his eſteem, as procured him great reſpect from all the grandees of the court; but the ſame reaſons for which they paid him all theſe honours, were the cauſe of his ruin. Thoſe who envied him his good fortune, inſinuated to the Emperor

Emperor, that he ought to be upon his guard againſt a Prince who thought he had a right to the empire. They told him that his bare name was ſufficient to make him dreaded, for that the ſon of an Emperor would be very apt to believe he had good pretenſions to a throne that had been, in a manner hereditary in his family. That Severian had a good ſhare of ambition, and wanted nothing but a fair opportunity of making himſelf head of a party.

Licinius gave attention to theſe artful diſcourſes, and began to look upon Severian as a dangerous perſon. His jealouſy was attended with cruel conſequences, for, fearing he might one day have a troubleſome competitor in this Prince, he was determined to make himſelf eaſy in that reſpect, and reſolved that Severian ſhould expiate with his life, whatever deſigns of that kind he might have entertained. The unfortunate Prince fell a victim to this inhuman precaution, and Candidian was alſo involved with him in the ſame misfortune, when he had leaſt reaſon to expect any ſuch thing, for they were both put to death together. Valeria, and Priſca her mother, were proſcribed, but being diſguiſed, made their eſcape, and wandered about from province to province for fifteen months.

Their evaſion made Licinius the more eager to apprehend them. For a long time paſt he had been exaſperated againſt Valeria, who had refuſed to yield up to him her right to Galerius's effects. Beſides, as ſhe was daughter and widow to Emperors, he looked upon her as one, who, if not in a condition to make a party, was at leaſt capable of ſpiriting up ſome other perſon. The Emperor, after weighing and conſidering theſe things, thought he had reaſon ſufficient to take away the

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lives of theſe fugitive Princeſſes. He had them purſued by people, who took their meaſures ſo well, that they were overtaken at Theſſalonica, where he cauſed them to be tried as priſoners of ſtate. It was certainly a difficult matter to convict them of any crime, but thoſe are always guilty, who have the misfortune to fall under the diſpleaſure of the Prince; accordingly, the corrupt judges knew their duty too well, not to condemn them to death. They were conducted therefore to the place of execution, accompanied by a great multitude, who were drawn together by the novelty of the ſpectacle, and who beheld, with great aſtoniſhment the heads of two Empreſſes cut off by the hands of the common hangman. The bodies were thrown into the ſea. This was the tragical end * of Priſca and Valeria, who may be ſaid to have died martyrs to their illuſtrious birth, and their extraordinary virtue.

The Empreſs Eutropia had a happier deſtiny. After the death of Maximinus-Hercules her huſband, ſhe went to live with Fauſta her daughter, in Conſtantine's court. As ſhe was paſt the age of pleaſures, ſhe thought of nothing but how to paſs the remainder of her life in peace and quietneſs, far from the noiſe and hurry of buſineſs. She lived to ſee that happy change in the empire, occaſioned by Conſtantine her ſon-in-law's embracing chriſtianity, which Hercules and Diocleſian had endeavoured to extirpate. It daily gained ground from that time, got the better of idolatry, and was profeſſed at court, and in all the provinces. The croſs became the greateſt ornament of the Roman enſigns, and the crowns of the Emperors. Conſtantine was ſo aſſiduous in propagating the faith, that not only the imperial family, but the greateſt part

* Lactan. lib. 51.

part of the court embraced Chriſtianity; Eutropia was one of the firſt to profeſs a religion that had maintained itſelf in oppoſition to all the power of the Emperors, who had exhauſted all their malice and authority to aboliſh it, though the Chriſtians, in their defence, made uſe of no other weapons than their patience and their prayers.

After Eutropia was well inſtructed in the maxims of the goſpel, ſhe practiſed them with ſo much zeal and ſtrictneſs, that all the indiſcretions of her paſt life were forgot. She was as ſolicitous to promote Chriſtianity as Hercules her huſband had been to deſtroy it. She not only conformed herſelf to its laws, but uſed her utmoſt endeavours to aboliſh all the impious rites of the Pagans, and even ſome ſuperſtitions that had been introduced among the Chriſtians, to the ſcandal of their holy religion, which more than any thing evinced the ſolidity of her belief. This appeared by her care to ſuppreſs the annual ceremonies that were performed under the famous Oak of Mambre, ſo remarkable in the ſcripture for having been the reſidence of the patriarch Abraham, and the place where the angels d nounced the ruin of Sodom.

This was always celebrated in ſummer, and a vaſt concourſe of Jews, Chriſtians and even Heathens, uſed to aſſemble there upon that occaſion. The firſt *, to honour the memory of Abraham, the ſecond to ſolemniſe the apparition of their Meſſia, who they imagined ſpoke to the patriarch in the form of an angel; and the Pagans, becauſe they looked upon thoſe angels to have been in reality, their gods, whom they honoured by erecting altars there, upon which they placed idols,

* Soſom.

idols, and offered ſacrifices and libations; ſo that each of them, for one reaſon or other, had the greateſt reſpect and veneration for that place, and this occaſioned an odd mixture of Pagon ceremonies Jewiſh ſuperſtitions, and Chriſtian devotions. There was a great fair held every year in that place, which drew an infinite number of people from Phænicia, Paleſtine, and Arabia.

Eutropia taking a journey into Paleſtine, paſſed thro' the valley of Mambre juſt when they were celebrating theſe ceremonies, and ſaw the impious ſacrifices that the heathens offered to their idols. and the ſuperſtitions of the Chriſtians, who imagined they were performing their duty in a very commendable way. She was extreamly offended when ſhe obſerved, that God and the devil were worſhipped in the ſame place; and that this valley, which had been ſanctified by the ſolemn promiſes which the Almighty had made to Abraham, that from him ſhould ſpring one in whom all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed, ſhould become a theatre of impiety and prophaneneſs. She reſolved to do all in her power to remedy this evil, and wrote to her ſon-in-law upon this ſubject, informing him of what ſhe had ſeen done by the Pagans, Jews, and even Chriſtians, who all diſhonoured that venerable place, ſome by their idolatrous libations, and others by their indiſcreet practice of a miſtaken devotion.

Conſtantine, who eagerly embraced every opportunity of ſignaliſing his zeal for the Chriſtian religion, ordered all the idols to be burnt, the altars to be overthrown, and to ruin entirely every thing that ſavoured of Paganiſm and ſuperſtition. He cauſed a church to be built in the very ſpot, and laid under ſevere penalties thoſe who, for the future,

future, ſhould dare to prophane that venerable place.

Hiſtory makes no further mention of Eutropia, but, in all appearance, ſhe continued the reſt of her life in the ſtricteſt practice of the religion ſhe had profeſſed.

CONSTANTIA,

Wife of LICINIUS.

NOTHING is generally attended with worſe conſequences, than a woman's ſetting up for ſuperior wiſdom and talents in point of religion; for as their want of learning and erudition, does not admit of their penetrating thoſe myſteries that are ſo much beyond their capacity, it is very eaſy for them to be miſtaken. The obſtinacy with which they maintain their opinions, is apt to make them deaf to all the arguments that would be capable of undeceiving them; and if they happen to be perſons of authority, what evils and miſchiefs may not be committed in purſuance of a paſſion, which they falſly call a true zeal for the church? Error cannot poſſibly meet with a firmer ſupport, nor truth a more formidable enemy. We have a ſad example of this in Conſtantia.

She was daughter of Conſtantius-Chlorus, and of Theodora, ſecond wife of that Emperor. It is very probable that ſhe was born in England, where her father commonly reſided after he was made Cæſar. She was a princeſs of uncommon merit, exempt from moſt of the weakneſſes of her ſex, and added, to an extraordinary beauty, the greateſt perfections of mind. She had a maſculine courage, a large ſhare of diſcretion and prudence, and ſolid virtue. She was diſtinguiſhed by the force of her genius, a penetrating judgment in the moſt intricate affairs, a ſurpriſing eloquence, a firmneſs and reſolution that was not eaſily ſhaken, and had eſpecially ſo good a method of healing breaches, and making up differences between people at variance, that ſhe ſeldom failed in her attempts

tempts that way. She was, however, obſtinately attached to her own ſentiments, ſcarce ever to be perſuaded out of her firſt opinion, which was generally ſomething extraordinary, and contrary to that of other people; ſhe was very fond of being ſingular, even in religious matters, which occaſioned great inconveniencies and diſadvantages to the church.

Conſtantia was but very young when the Emperor her father died at York It is generally believed, that ſhe continued with Conſtantine her brother, who was proclaimed Emperor with the univerſal approbation of the troops, and that ſhe remained at court with Theodora her mother, and the Empreſs Eutropia her grand-mother.

The Prætorians at Rome being extremely provoked when they heard of Conſtantine's election, would not admit of an Emperor that was choſen by the army in England without their conſent, and of whoſe bounty they had not been partakers, ſo they proclaimed Emperor, Maxentius, the real or ſuppoſed ſon of Hercules, who had already reſigned the Imperial dignity: Licinius was choſen ſome time after, and augmented the number of the Cæſars.

It would have been much to be wondered at, if peace had long been preſerved among four princes who had an equal ſhare in the ſovereign authority, for moderation is a virtue unknown to ambitious minds. Hercules, who had diveſted himſelf of the ſupreme power, would gladly have reaſumed it; and, the better to gain his point, made a ſtrict alliance with Conſtantine, whoſe daughter he married; but, it was not long before he conſpired againſt his ſon-in-law, which coſt him his life; for, finding that the conſpiracy was diſcovered, he fled to Marſeilles, where he was aſſaſſinated.

Conſtantine ſoon found another enemy in Maxentius, and when he marched againſt him, had a ſure preſage of the victory he obtained, by the miraculous croſs that appeared to him, with the circumſtances that are well known to every body. This made him reſolve to embrace Chriſtianity, and Conſtantia followed her brother's example. She renounced idolatry, and became very zealous for the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe maxims ſhe followed with extraordinary fervour and devotion, and which gave a new luſtre to all her other amiable qualities.

Conſtantine having defeated Maxentius, entered Rome in triumph, and then regulated the affairs of the empire, together with Licinius his collegue; and in order to cement a ſolid peace and friendſhip between them, he gave him his ſiſter Conſtantia in marriage, who was then in the height of her youth and beauty.

The nuptials were celebrated at Milan with extraordinary pomp and magnificence. Conſtantine, who infinitely loved the princeſs his ſiſter, and put the greateſt value upon her diſcretion and virtue, omitted nothing that could contribute to the ſplendor of this ceremony. To do it the greater honour, he invited Diocleſian, but that prince deſired to be excuſed, which refuſal diſobliged Conſtantine extreamly.

Licinius was not worthy of ſo great an alliance. His birth was obſcure, and though he pretended to be deſcended from the Emperor Philip, it is certain, that he had no great nobility to boaſt of. It is true, that he had a very military air, and, in effect, was a good officer, and a great enemy to flatterers; but at the ſame time was vicious beyond meaſure, and had ſomething haughty and ſevere in his deportment, that ſufficiently denoted

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that cruelty which appeared in all his actions. He was of a ſour diſpoſition, unjuſt, a great diſſembler, covetous, and quite incapable of any ſort of politeneſs. He was a declared enemy to men of learning, who, he ſaid, were the peſts of the Republick; and being very ignorant himſelf, he avoided, as much as poſſible, and perſecuted ſtudious people, eſpecially orators and lawyers, who, he ſaid ought to be exterminated, for that they were the ruin and deſtruction of empires. He was brutally inveterate againſt the Chriſtians, and perſecuted them with a fury that was equally inhuman and ungrateful. Beſides, he indulged himſelf in the moſt ſhameful of all vices, and his incontinence ſpared neither age, ſex, nor condition. Such was the huſband that Conſtantine, for reaſons of ſtate, gave to his ſiſter.

After the nuptial ceremony, the two Emperors ſeparated. One of the conditions of this marriage was, that Licinius ſhould do nothing againſt Chriſtianity; for Conſtantine, who had embraced it, inſiſted upon his collegue's ſuffering the Chriſtians to practiſe their religion in peace and quietneſs. So that Licinius, though ſuperſtitiouſly attached to the worſhip of idols, pretended to have ſome regard for them. The Empreſs's being of that profeſſion, and the fear of diſobliging Conſtantine, who intereſted himſelf very much in their favour, was what reſtrained him. Their blood was, however, very often ſhed, which Licinius ſaw with pleaſure; and though he had the artifice to throw all the blame upon the governors of the provinces, it was eaſy enough to perceive, by his forbearing to puniſh ſuch as committed thoſe cruelties, that they were far from giving him any offence.

The Empreſs was well acquainted with his implacable hatred to the Chriſtians, and made uſe of all the power and intereſt ſhe had over him to conquer, in ſome meaſure, his averſion to them. She ſecretly informed her brother of every thing that was carrying on againſt them in Licinius's court, and the church was beholden to her for the tranquillity it enjoyed at that time. It would, indeed, have been no eaſy matter for Licinius to refuſe any thing that was requeſted of him, by an Empreſs whoſe extraordinary merit, and amiable qualities, rendered her ſo worthy of his eſteem and affection. But, it was not by her ſolicitations only, that Conſtantia was ſerviceable to the Chriſtians; they felt, upon a thouſand occaſions, the effects of her goodneſs and liberality, which ſhe diffuſed among as many of them as ſtood in need of her aſſiſtance.

The ſucceſs that Conſtantine had met with in his wars, and which he, with gratitude, attributed to the protection of the God of the Chriſtians, and the public profeſſion that he and his family, and all the grandees of the court made of that religion, prevailed alſo upon Licinius to pretend a belief of thoſe divine laws; but as ſoon as he was at a diſtance from Conſtantine, he forgot all the promiſes that he had made to his brother-in-law. He baniſhed all the Chriſtians from his houſe, re-eſtabliſhed the worſhip of idols, and abandoned himſelf to all the abominations that are the natural fruits of idolatry. His inſatiable paſſion for pleaſures revived; he gave himſelf up to all manner of debauchery, and that, with ſo little reſerve or reſtraint, that ladies of the greateſt quality were compelled to ſubmit to his infamous and brutal inclinations.

Conſtantia grieved in ſecret at her huſband's courſe

courſe of life, but to no purpoſe; for neither her remonſtrances, nor entreaties, nor the charms of her perſon, which pleaded with ſo much eloquence, were of force enough to produce any good effects upon him, who was ſuch a ſlave to his paſſions, that he ſcrupled at nothing that could contribute to their gratification. He was not contented with having diſhonoured the moſt illuſtrious families, but was earneſtly bent upon corrupting a young lady belonging to the Empreſs, whoſe virtue recommended her to Conſtantia, infinitely more than her beauty, though ſhe had a very great ſhare of it.

The court was then at Nicomedia, which was, without diſpute, the moſt agreeable town in Bithynia, where Diocleſian had built a magnificent palace, which was the ordinary reſidence of the Emperors. It was then that the famous Euſebius became known to the Empreſs, who introduced him to Licinius, and, by her ſolicitation, made him biſhop of Nicomedia.

Conſtantia, of all the ladies at court, loved Glaphyra moſt. She was a young perſon of incomparable beauty and virtue. The Emperor was captivated with her charms, and not being a man to deny his inclinations, uſed all the means he could think of to ſeduce her; but knowing of what importance it was to his deſign to go artfully to work, and not alarm the Empreſs, who was very watchful over the conduct of her ladies, he employed Benignus, captain of his guards, to negociate this affair.

Princes, above all mankind, are ſo unfortunate as to meet with people that are ever ready to ſacrifice honour and conſcience to pleaſe them. Benignus informed Glaphyra of the impreſſion that her beauty had made on the Emperor, and what

Licinius expected from her. He did not fail to exaggerate the advantages ſhe might reckon upon from her complaiſance upon this occaſion, the credit it would procure her at court, and the reſpect that would be ſhewn her by all the empire as ſoon as it ſhould be known that ſhe was miſtreſs of the Emperor's affections. He put in practice all that cunning and artifice, with which thoſe, who undertake that ſort of infamous commerce, are ſo well acquainted.

Glaphyra, who was not only a Chriſtian, but with great ſtrictneſs lived up to the religion ſhe profeſſed, was much ſurpriſed at this diſcourſe, and far from congratulating herſelf upon her conqueſt, ſhe was extreamly afflicted. She foreſaw, at one view, all ſhe had to ſuffer from a prince of his violent paſſions, and who ſtuck at nothing to gratify them. This ſpeech of Benignus put her into ſuch confuſion, that it ſufficiently demonſtrated how much ſhe was embarraſſed at a declaration which ſhe neither expected nor deſired; ſhe gave the captain of the guard ſuch an anſwer as was conſiſtent with her uſual virtue and diſcretion, and then went to communicate this to the Empreſs, and adviſe with her how ſhe was to behave. Conſtantia well knew that Licinius was not eaſily diſſuaded from any thing he had reſolved upon; on the contrary, the more obſtacles he met with, the more obſtinate he was; and as ſhe did every thing with great prudence, ſhe did not think fit to expoſe Glaphyra's chaſtity to the powerful attempts of Licinius, nor to provoke him by reproaches, which are more apt to augment the evil than cure it; but after revolving in her mind what was moſt proper to be done, ſhe at laſt determined that Glaphyra ſhould be diſguiſed in mens cloaths. She ordered magnificent apparel

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to be provided for her with the greateſt expedition, gave her a ſplended equipage, and a large ſum of money, and committing her to the care of people whoſe virtue ſhe could depend upon, ordered them to conduct her to a place of ſafety.

Glaphyra, being thus metamorphoſed, quitted Nicomedia, and ſet out on her travels; ſhe every where paſſed for a young military tribune, who was charged with ſome ſecret orders of the court, till ſhe arrived at Amaſia, the capital town of Pontus in Aſia. Quintius, the moſt conſiderable perſon in the city, taking Glaphyra for a young nobleman who was honoured with the Emperor's particular confidence, made him a viſit, and even offered him his houſe. The pretended tribune yielded to the civility of Quintius, and was prevailed on to accept of an apartment in his palace; he enquired into the ſtate of the chriſtian religion at Amaſia, and had the ſatisfaction to be informed that the Chriſtians were under the direction of a biſhop, who was remarkable for his zeal, piety and eloquence.

It would have been next to impoſſible for Glaphyra not to truſt her ſecret, and the motive of her journey, to ſome body or other, as ſhe foreſaw that a ſtranger, who made the appearance of a perſon of diſtinction, would be narrowly obſerved. She thought ſhe could not do better than to make a confident of this good biſhop, and put herſelf under his protection. Beſides, ſhe was perſuaded that it was her duty to open her heart to ſome diſcreet perſon, who might give her the conſolation and aſſiſtance ſhe ſtood in need of.

The biſhop's name was Baſil, a prelate of a moſt exemplary life, and to him Glaphyra communicated the myſtery of her journey, and the danger to which ſhe muſt have been expoſed, if

ſhe had not fled in diſguiſe. Baſil commended the innocent artifice ſhe had made uſe of to preſerve her honour, comforted her, with good advice, and confirmed her in her generous reſolution, to die rather than ſubmit to the infamous deſires of Licinius. He inſtructed her how ſhe ſhould conduct herſelf during the ſtay ſhe ſhould be obliged to make at Amaſia, and, above all, recommended it to her to be exceedingly careful not to mention this affair to any other perſon, for fear the governor of the town ſhould come to the knowledge of it.

She followed exacty the counſel that Baſil had given her, and informed the Empreſs of the charitable care the biſhop of Amaſia took of her, together with her reſolution of continuing in that place, under the guidance of a prelate, who was both able and willing to aſſiſt her.

Conſtantia was rejoyced to hear of her being ſafe, and ſent her, from time to time, conſiderable ſums of money, which Glaphyra applied to pious uſes. She gave the greateſt part of it to the biſhop, who, taking advantage of the tranquillity the Chriſtians were in at that time, made uſe of it for the conſtruction of a church that he was carrying on, and which his ſmall fund would by no means have done without this aid; ſo that the Empreſs's liberality to Glaphyra was a very ſeaſonable ſupply; and Conſtantia being informed, by Glaphyra, that the biſhop had occaſion for money to finiſh the building, made him a handſome preſent for that purpoſe.

Glaphyra's flight made a great noiſe at court, and Licinius, who did not, without the utmoſt vexation, ſee the prey delivered out of his talons, ordered that the ſtricteſt ſearch ſhould be made in every place that he imagined was likely for her to

have retired to, but in vain; Glaphyra, in Amaſia, was ſecure againſt the indignation and power of the tyrant.

The Empreſs had frequently the pleaſure of receiving letters from her favourite, but unluckily Benignus, the Emperor's confident, intercepted one of them, by which accident he diſcovered the whole ſecret, and informed Licinius of it. This put the Emperor in ſuch a rage, that he thought of no leſs than ſacrificing Glaphyra and Baſil to his fury. In effect, he directed the governor of Amaſia, who was a Pagan, to ſend him Glaphyra and the biſhop in irons.

Licinius, however, had not the ſatisfaction of being revenged of Glaphyra, for it pleaſed providence to recompence her virtue, by delivering her out of this world; ſo that when the Emperor's orders arrived at Amaſia, ſhe was already dead. But Baſil was conducted to Nicomedia, where he received the crown of martyrdom for having protected the honour and chaſtity of this holy virgin.

The cruelty of Licinius towards the Chriſtians very much offended Conſtantine. That pious Emperor, who was as zealous for the church as his collegue was attached to the heathen ſuperſtitions, could not, with indifference, ſee Licinius violating the moſt eſſential condition of their treaty, by which he had obliged himſelf to permit the Chriſtians in the Eaſt to practiſe their religion in full liberty. Conſtantia who was a true Chriſtian herſelf, informed her brother ſecretly of every thing that paſſed at Licinius's court that was prejudicial to the church. It is true, that when, by her remonſtrances, ſhe imagined ſhe had inſpired her huſband with more humane ſentiments, ſhe became an interceſſor in his behalf with her brother;

brother; and the Emperor, who was extreamly fond of his ſiſter, diſſembled the reaſons he had to complain of Licinius, and even pardoned him his revolts; but Licinius was only ſo much the more ungrateful. That perfidious diſſembler was, underhand, hatching treaſon againſt Conſtantine at the very time when he himſelf enjoyed the empire, meerly becauſe Conſtantine would not deprive him of it.

Conſtantia thought this monſtrous ingratitude was unworthy of a pardon, ſo would no longer intercede with her brother for Licinius, who was not to be wrought upon, either by threats or kindneſs. Conſtantine, therefore, finding that he could never be ſecure againſt the plots and conſpiracies of Licinius, if he did not put it out of his power to injure him, declared war againſt him, and obtained a compleat victory, which Conſtantia heard of with pleaſure. She knew that Licinius was a declared enemy to Chriſtianity, and that the intereſts of her family were not to be put in competition with her religion: that her huſband was incapable of being ever prevailed on to quit his idols, after all the arguments and means ſhe had made uſe of to endeavour his converſion, but without ſucceſs. Beſides, ſhe had reaſon to apprehend that ſome time or other, Licinius might get the better of her brother, either by force or treachery, and then ſhe could expect no other, than that ſhe herſelf would fall a ſacrifice to the advantages her brother had gained over her huſband. She was of opinion, that after having ſo often intereſted herſelf for him, and employed all the credit ſhe had with her brother to procure forgiveneſs for Licinius (ever ungrateful and rebellious) it was no longer her duty to ſhew ſo much warmth and zeal for a huſband who was, by no

no means, deſerving of it; eſpecially ſince, by continuing to do ſo, ſhe might give juſt grounds to her brother to ſuſpect her being his enemy: ſhe therefore, when Licinius was defeated, brought his imperial robe to her brother, to ſhew that ſhe did not intend to eſpouſe his cauſe, or concern herſelf any longer for him.

Conſtantine however had ſo much complaiſance for his ſiſter as to grant Licinius his life, and aſſign him a revenue ſuitable to his rank; but he, whoſe turbulent and unquiet temper was never at reſt, could not forbear forming parties, and caballing with factious and ſeditious people againſt Conſtantine, ſo was at laſt put to death.

Conſtantia reſided in her brother's court together with young Licinius her ſon. This Prince was very handſome, and had a great deal of life and vivacity in his countenance; but, at the ſame time a haughtineſs in his air and carriage that was not agreeable. His father had brought him up a pagan, and tho' Conſtantia had prevailed on him to turn chriſtian in appearance, it was very eaſy to perceive, that in reality, he was as much a heathen as ever. Conſtantine, to comfort his ſiſter for the loſs of her huſband, and to demonſtrate to the whole empire, that he had been compelled to put Licinius to death for his repeated treaſons, declared the young Prince conſul, which employment he exerciſed with ſo much pride and oſtentation, that he ſufficiently ſhewed he had ambition enough to aſpire to greater matters. Fauſta was jealous of this, and feared, that in Licinius, her children would one day find a dangerous competitor, and that he would revenge upon them the death of his father. Conſtantine, who foreſaw things at a diſtance, made the ſame reflections, which

which did not a little contribute to determine him to put young Licinius to death.

Conſtantia was infinitely afflicted at the loſs of her ſon; but, in a great meaſure, diſſembled her grief, rather than occaſion any uneaſineſs to her brother, for whom her intereſt, as well as duty, obliged her to have great complaiſance. He indeed, had ſo extraordinary an affection for her, that he gave her a power equal to his own, and which was increaſed by the death of the Empreſs Helena, for whom Conſtantine had always the greateſt regard.

Conſtantia, who was widow of one Emperor, and ſiſter to another, ſucceeded to the credit that Helena had enjoyed at court. All favours paſſed through her hands. The affection her brother had for her procured her the eſteem and reſpect of the whole empire.

Euſebius, whom Conſtantia had made biſhop of Nicomedia, cultivated with great aſſiduity his acquaintance with her; for that prelate, being of a ſupple, complaiſant diſpoſition, excelled in the art of paying one's court, ſo that no body was better received by the Empreſs than the biſhop of Nicomedia. This made him very conſiderable at the Emperor's palace, and as he knew ſo well how to put in practice every thing that could contribute to his advancement, he ſoon inſinuated himſelf into the good graces of Conſtantine, and became very powerful, tho' he had ſecretly favoured the party of Licinius againſt the Emperor, and even againſt chriſtians in general, in order to ſecure to himſelf a favourable reception in which ſoever of the courts ſhould get the better of the other. He did not at all ſcruple, to make religion ſubſervient to his temporal intereſts and ambition. As ſoon as Arius had broached his new doctrine,

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and had drawn upon himſelf an excommunication from the biſhop of Alexandria, Euſebius, who was tainted with the ſame principles, undertook to defend him. He introduced him at court, and took no ſmall pains to infect the Empreſs Conſtantia with thoſe tenets, in which he ſucceeded but too well, for ſhe ſwallowed with greedineſs, the fatal poiſon of hereſy. Arius had an impoſing outſide, a grave and devout air, a polite and inſinuating converſation, and ſo much the appearance of a virtuous and religious man, that the Empreſs was deceived by it, and looked upon him as a perſon of rare and uncommon talents, who knew better than the reſt of mankind, how to treat of divine matters, and the myſteries of religion. It was after this manner, ſays St. Jerome, that Arius, being reſolved to propagate his hereſy, began by ſeducing the Emperor's ſiſter; and as he further obſerves, it has always been a maxim with thoſe deceivers, to lay their ſnares for women in the firſt place, as the ſerpent began by ſeducing Eve.

It is certain that Arianiſm could not poſſibly have met with a more powerful protectreſs than Conſtantia, ſo it is not to be wondered at, if it ſpread prodigiouſly, and cauſed great diſorders in the church. To put a ſtop to this, Conſtantine aſſembled the famous council of Nice, in which the errors of Arius were condemned. Euſebius was depoſed, and the Emperor would have baniſhed him, if the prelate, who was extremely loth to quit the court, had not pretended to renounce Arianiſm, and if he had not ſigned the condemnation of that hereſy, againſt which the council had thundered out its Anathemas.

After this he found no great difficulty in reinſtating himſelf in the good graces of Conſtantine, by

by the help of his friends, eſpecially by the Empreſs's intereſt. As he was ſtill an Arian at the bottom, he laboured inceſſantly to promote that doctrine, which the council had exploded, and to invent calumnies againſt Athanaſius, who had been made biſhop of Alexandria, and was the greateſt oppoſer of Arius. Euſebius's cunning and artifices had, at firſt, all the ſucceſs he could deſire; he accuſed Athanaſius of a thouſand crimes, and of treaſon among the reſt; and ſo well diſguiſed his impoſture, with an appearance of truth, that the Emperor looked upon Athanaſius as a very dangerous and ſeditious perſon. But the good patriarch, having been cited before Conſtantine, made the falſehood of theſe ſlanders appear ſo manifeſtly, that the Emperor was convinced of his innocence, conceived a greater eſteem for him than ever, and was determined to baniſh his accuſers.

This was like a thunder ſtroke to Euſebius, who did not expect ſo unlucky a turn. Conſtantia was extremely afflicted at his diſgrace, but knowing that her brother was highly exaſperated againſt him, and that her interceding for him at that time, would make Conſtantine ſuſpect, that ſhe held the ſame opinions with Euſebius, ſhe thought it beſt not to employ her credit in his behalf till a more favourable opportunity.

This ſhe imagined happened ſoon after, on the dedication of the town of Conſtantinople, which was called after the Emperor, and which town he made the ſeat of the empire. Conſtantine, at the ſame time, celebrated his entrance upon the 25th year of his reign, and the 5th year ſince his ſon Conſtantius was created Cæſar, which greatly added to the magnificence of the ceremony. Conſtantia concluded, that there could not poſſibly be a more

a more convenient time than this, to ſolicit the return of Euſebius, whoſe abſence ſhe could not bear. She made uſe of all her credit with her brother to obtain this favour, and alſo ſet her nephew Conſtantius to work on the ſame account, who joined his entreaties to thoſe of Conſtantia. The Emperor not being able to reſiſt theſe importunities, conſented that the prelate ſhould return.

Conſtantia could not have done a greater prejudice to the church; for Euſebius was more to be feared than Arius himſelf, who would not have been able to propagate his tenets, without the aſſiſtance of Euſebius and ſome other biſhops. This juſtice muſt however be done to the Empreſs, that ſhe did not believe Euſebius was heretically inclined, but rather imagined that he was unreaſonably perſecuted, by thoſe who were jealous of his ſuperior merit and learning. This Princeſs was perſuaded that his opinions were very innocent, and being deſirous to diſtinguiſh herſelf from other people, pretended to greater knowledge in divine myſteries than the reſt of her ſex, ſo drank deep of the poiſon of Arianiſm, and not thinking there was the leaſt harm in it, became the protectreſs of its moſt zealous champion. And what was ſtill worſe, ſhe perſiſted in this error till her death, for, to her laſt moment, ſhe continued her endeavours to recommend, to Conſtantine's favour and friendſhip, the moſt dangerous enemy to the church. This perſon was a prieſt, intirely in the intereſts of the Arians, and more zealous for that doctrine than Arius himſelf. He concealed his true ſentiments under the appearance of an extraordinary piety, which deceived thoſe who were not intimately acquainted with him. Euſebius, the biſhop of Nicomedia, put the greateſt confidence in this hypocrite, and truſted

truſted him with his moſt important ſecrets. He introduced him to the Empreſs Conſtantia as a man of conſummate virtue. This prieſt, by his devout air, his inſinuating converſation, and external ſanctity, maintained the character that was given of him to the Empreſs, and gained ſuch an aſcendant over her, that he could manage her as he pleaſed. Conſtantia did nothing without his advice; and, as ſhe affected to practiſe a devotion that was out of the common track, and different from other people's, ſhe liſtned to no body but this artful deceiver, who, under pretence of conducting her to perfection by ſuch ſublime methods as were far above the capacity of inferior geniuſes, infected her with the moſt dangerous hereſy, and which was prepared with the greateſt art and cunning.

As ſoon as this diſſembler perceived that the Empreſs placed an entire confidence in him, he conſulted with his patron Euſebius about the means of getting Arius recalled, and how to intereſt the Empreſs in his favour. They did not doubt, but it would be very difficult to procure his pardon, if they did not take the greateſt precautions; for Conſtantine was extremely zealous for the Nicene opinions, and conſequently, was no friend to thoſe who were accuſed of differing from them. This Prieſt therefore, being in converſation with the Empreſs, artfully turned the diſcourſe upon Arius, and affecting to ſigh and look very melancholy, the Empreſs aſked him the reaſon of it? The prieſt anſwered, with an air of affliction, that he could not help being grieved, when he thought what a ſad condition, one of the beſt of men was in, who was cruelly oppreſſed by thoſe, who envied the ſublime talents, and extraordinary gifts with which Providence had bleſſed him.

him. "Arius (ſays he) is unfortunate only be-
"cauſe he is the worthieſt and greateſt eccle-
"ſiaſtick the church can boaſt of: his merit and
"virtue are his only crimes. This divine man
"is fallen under the diſpleaſure of the patriarch
"Alexander, and is become the object of his per-
"ſecution. He cannot endure a perſon, whoſe
"profound doctrine is univerſally eſteemed, and
"who had acquired ſuch knowledge in the my-
"ſteries of religion, as few have attained to.
"The Patriarch has done his utmoſt to baniſh,
"from Alexandria, this perſon of uncommon
"parts and learning, merely becauſe he was
"eclipſed by him; and has cauſed him to be con-
"demned in the council, by imputing to him,
"doctrines and opinions that he never entertain-
"ed. The whole town of Alexandria are wit-
"neſſes of this great man's innocence, for he has
"for many years paſt, preached with ſuch gene-
"ral applauſe, that it is acknowledged by every
"body, that none before him had ever acquired
"ſuch noble and ſublime ſentiments in religious
"matters. This man, however, ſo much fa-
"voured and enlightened by heaven, and who
"deſerves the firſt dignities in the church, is fal-
"len a ſacrifice to the blackeſt malice and envy,
"baniſhed his country, driven ſhamefully out of
"the church, and treated with more hatred and
"inveteracy than if he were a declared enemy to
"religion."

Conſtantia liſtned with great attention to her director, whom ſhe little ſuſpected of having any intention to deceive her. She did not doubt but all he had ſaid of Arius, and the perſecutions he had undergone, were literally true. From that time Conſtantia looked upon Arius as the greateſt man in the church, being perſuaded that he, who had

had ſpoke ſo much in his behalf, was the perſon in the world the moſt capable of judging of true merit. She durſt not however at that time intercede for him with her brother, knowing him to be very averſe to Arianiſm. It was, for all that, a great advantage to Arius and his diſciples, to have prepoſſeſſed the Empreſs in his behalf, for they knew ſo well how to make the moſt of her favourable diſpoſitions with regard to him, that they never reſted till they had gained their point, and got him recalled from baniſhment.

Matters were in this ſituation when Conſtantia fell dangerouſly ill, and during her ſickneſs, Conſtantine viſited her every day. He gave her undoubted marks of the ſincere love and affection he had for her, and of his ardent deſire to contribute every thing in his power to her recovery; but her diſeaſe was not to be got the better of by all the remedies that could be thought of, ſo that Conſtantia knew ſhe was come to her laſt period. The Emperor was in the utmoſt affliction, when he was informed, by the phyſicians, that he was to loſe the perſon in the world he loved beſt. The Empreſs, finding that death approached very faſt, and ſeeing her brother at her bed's foot overwhelmed with ſorrow, ſhe took him by the hand, and with dying looks, "My dear brother" (ſaid ſhe, in a weak voice) "I have received from you "an infinite number of favours and kindneſſes, "which you have conferred upon me, with ſo "much generoſity, that I cannot doubt of your "granting that which I am now to aſk. It is in"deed the laſt requeſt I ſhall ever trouble you "with, but more valuable than all the reſt. It "is that you will give me leave, in return for all "your goodneſs, to make you ſuch a preſent as "will, above all things, ſhew my ſincere affection

" tion and gratitude. Princes abound with cour-
" tiers and ſycophants, who are zealous enough
" for their own intereſts, to promote their tem-
" poral honour and grandeur, but they are ſo un-
" fortunate as to have but few real friends about
" them, who are ſolicitous for their eternal ſalva-
" tion. See here (ſays ſhe) a man whoſe virtue,
" merit, and fidelity I am well acquainted with,
" (preſenting him her director,) he will inſpire
" you with thoſe exalted ſentiments which he has
" received from the Almighty, and which he has
" been ſo good as to impart to me. He will be
" always inviolably attached to your ſpiritual in-
" tereſts, and will conduct you to perfection by
" ſuch ways, as providence has communicated to
" no other but himſelf. Your future happineſs
" will be ſecure in his hands; ſo I can ſafely
" affirm, that I give you an ineſtimable treaſure.
" I beſeech you to put an intire confidence in
" him, and to be ever mindful, that he was given
" you by a ſiſter who has nothing to wiſh for
" but your everlaſting happineſs. I will now con-
" feſs to you, that it has not been without the
" moſt ſenſible grief and concern, that I have
" ſeen you ſo apt to be deceived by thoſe who
" have made an ill uſe of the truſt you have
" placed in them, and have prevailed on you to
" perſecute, very unjuſtly, the moſt deſerving
" eccleſiaſticks, who have by their inſtigation,
" been ſhamefully driven from the church. Take
" care, that that unreaſonable ſeverity does not
" draw upon you ſome dreadful puniſhment.
" This is the laſt petition of a ſiſter, who, you
" may be aſſured, is now ſolicitous for nothing
" but your true intereſt, and who muſt leave you
" in a few moments."

She had great difficulty to utter theſe words. The agony of death ſeized her, and ſhe expired in the preſence of her brother, who was inconſolable, and upon whom her words made great impreſſion.

Thus Conſtantia employed the laſt moments of her life in recommending, to Conſtantine's protection, Arius and his followers; who but too well knew how to take advantage of the indulgence that was procured them by Conſtantia's dying requeſt, which ſunk deep into the heart of the Emperor.

End of the Third and Laſt Volume.

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